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CATERPILLAR 20

June 1973

Charles Baudelaire: (3 poems 2
César Vallejo: SPANISH IMAGE OF DEATH 8
Paul Blackburn: THE SELECTION OF HEAVEN 10
Fielding Dawson: THE SINGING MAN 30
Theodore Enslin: SYNTHESIS, 8 35
Hayden Carruth: PARAGRAPHS 1 - 5 64
Carl Thayler: 2 sections from THE YARD 67
Gary Snyder: (2 poems 71
Jerome Rothenberg: COKBOY 73
David Antin: TO A DISTANT FRIEND 83
Clayton Eshleman: ADHESIVE LOVE 85
Robert Kelly: Section 23 of THE LOOM 96
Kenneth Irby: FOR THE SNOW QUEEN 105
Michael Heller: from THE INTERMINGLING 113
George Quasha: SOMAPOETICS 13 117
Robert Bertholf: AN ELEGANT INCONCLUSION 121
Thomas Meyer: iii 135
Spencer: photograph from ARCHANGELIC TOY 141
George Bereshinsky: ORDRE 142
Norman Weinstein: "shattered back/" 147
Michael Palmer: THE END OF THE ICE AGE 151
Michael Davidson: Palmer's Blake's Newton 153
Will Staple: (5 poems 157
Robert Glück: from SPACE POEM 161
Rae Armantrout: THE AIR 163
Tenney Nathanson: The Book of Death/ 165
Bruce McClelland: THE CELEBRANDTS 168
Bill Mayer: (4 poems 170
Lauren Shakely: (2 poems 173
Brief Notes: 176

Cover / Spencer

Charles Baudelaire: (3 poems

TO THE READER

Ignorance, avarice, error and vice
Rule our minds and work our flesh,
While remorse remains always lovely and fresh,
We' re like old tramps feeding their lice.

Our sins are tough, our repentance weak;
We charge a high price for confession,
And gladly we rejoin the muddy procession,
Washed clean by tears vile and meek

On our evil beds it' s Satan Trismegist
Who sings lullabies to our wits that dream,
While our wills are smelted into a molten stream
By this master of all alchemists

For it' s a devil' s dance to which we sway!
It' s the disgusting things whereof we speak well,
Taking our daily step towards Hell,
With no nose for the filth and stench of the way.

Like impoverished rakes who gnaw and kiss
An ancient whore' s bruised breast,
We sneak our pleasures as we go, in jest,
Rotten oranges squeezed dry of bliss.

Plentiful as worms, thick as flies,
Tribes of demons revel in our brains,
And when we breathe its death that drains
Slowly downward to our lungs with little cries.

If rape, poison, dagger and fire,
Have not yet made the picture whole,
The dreary design of our life' s goal,
It' s because our soul' s need is not yet dire.

But if among bitches, jackals, panthers, you inquire,
Monkeys, scorpions, vultures, vermin and kind,
Things that yelp, howl, growl, crawl, confined
In the hideous menageries of vicious desire,

You will find there one creature more ugly, more unclean
Who never moves nor makes a sound!
Gladly would he reduce the world to a mound
And swallow us all in a yawn that is mean.

His name is Boredom! His eyes are weak,
He dreams of violence amid hooka-smoke.
You know him, dear reader. He' s of our sensitive folk,
Hypocritical reader, -- brother, -- fellow freak!

CARRION

Remember, my love, what we saw that day,
A summer' s day so mild:
A hideous corpse, along our wandering way,
On a river-bed defiled.

With legs straight up, like a woman in heat,
Burning in poison and sweat,
Its belly lay open and its stinking meat
Smelled cynical, listless and wet.

The sun shone down on the rotting creature,
As if to cook it through,
As if to return a hundredfold to nature

Her own brew.

And heaven looked down and watched from above
The carcass proudly bloom.
Where we stood the stench was so strong, my love,
You seemed about to swoon.

Flies buzzed all over the putrescent belly,
Whence came a black swarm
Of maggots that oozed out as thick as jelly
Down over the tattered form.

All of it moved up and down like a wave,
Or erupted with a spitting sound;
It seemed almost to breathe by the sighs it gave,
As it lived and spawned on the ground.

And a strange kind of song came out of the thing,
As water or wind can give,
Or as grain that is winnowed can rhythmically sing
When it turns and rolls in the sieve.

Fading to nothing, its shape had grown dim,
Mere lines mere schemes,
Forgotten on an artist's easel and to be finished by him
Now only in his dreams.

We were watched by a nervous dog from behind some stones,
Who with angry eye,
Plotted her rescue from among the bones
Of the morsel she had let lie.

And so one day you too will be such ordure,
Such stench and horrible infection,
Star of my eyes, sun of my nature,
You, my angel and my passion!

Yes! So will you also be, oh queen of graces,
When last sacraments have been said,
And when beneath the sod and in rich flowering places,
Your bones moulder among the dead.

Then, oh my beauty, then you must tell the worms
While they eat and caress,
I am the keeper of the essence divine and the forms
Of our decayed happiness!

VOYAGE TO CYTHERA

Like a joyous bird my heart tossed on high,
In and out among the ropes gliding free;
Like an angel made drunk on sun and sea,
The ship rolled beneath a cloudless sky.

What island is this? -- Cythera, they say,
Famous in song, a black bleak space,
For trite old men an enchanted place;
Look! It' s an impoverished spot! -- In every way.

-- Island of sweet secrets and feasts of the heart,
Where the proud ghost of Venus of ancient lore
Like a scent pervades and haunts your shore,
While the mind grows heavy with love' s langorous art,

Island where the myrtle greens and flowers flare,
Glory sacred to all nations and for all of time,
Where the sighs of hearts that worship the sublime
Like incense in rose gardens roll through the air,

Or the timeless call of the calling dove!
-- Cythera was no more than a barren strip of land,
A desert of rock where shrill cries swept the sand.
It was then I caught sight of a strange object of love!

It was not a temple embosked in shade,
Where a young priestess, in love with her flowers,
Walked while her body burned with its secret powers,
Her dress open to the wind and the movement it made;

No. As we hugged the shore close enough to see
The birds we frightened with the white spread of our sails,
We could tell what it was: a gibbet, of three pales,
Black against the sky, like a cypress tree.

Wild angry birds were ravening away,
As they clung enraged to a corpse grown ripe;
Like tools the dripping beaks drove their gripe
Into the raw reaches of its decay;

Its eyes were two holes; from its belly leaked
The thick guts with which the thighs were spread;
A sickening delicacy on which they had fed!
The thing' s sex was gone where they had beaked.

Beneath its feet lunged upward again and again
Prowling beasts that roamed snouting the air;
Among them one taller, more fierce, worked there,
Like an executioner driving his men.

Oh citizen of Cythera, child of so fair a sky,
How silently you let yourself be assailed
For the heinous rites you expiate impaled
And for the sins which all burial deny!

I laugh, you gibbet-man! Yet your suffering is mine!
Your dangling body made me taste the gall
That rose against my teeth like a vomiting pall
Streaming from out of unhealed wounds like brine!

You made me remember, poor wretched bones,
The beaks, the jaws that I once felt,

Of vultures, panthers, the throbbing pain they dealt,
As they ground my flesh with teeth that pleasure hones!

-- How calm the seas! How lovely the skies!
But for me henceforth blood and a black cloud!
Alas! As within the folds of a shroud,
Wound into this allegory my heart now lies.

Venus, your island is an empty place,
A gibbet-symbol where my image clings...
-- Master! Grant me the strength that courage brings
To view my heart and body without feeling base!

[translations by Oreste F. Pucciani]

César Vallejo:

SPANISH IMAGE OF DEATH

There she goes! Call her! It' s her side!
There goes Death through Irun:
her accordion steps, her curse,
her meter of the cloth that I' ve mentioned,
her gram of that weight that I' ve not mentioned... if they' re real!
Call her! Hurry! She seeks me among the rifles,
since she well knows where I defeat her,
what my great trick is, my deceptive laws, my terrible codes.
Call her! she walks exactly like a man, among wild beasts,
she leans on that arm which entwines our feet
when we sleep in the trenches
& she stops at the elastic gates of dream.
She shouted! She shouted! She shouted her born sensorial shout!
She had shouted from shame, from seeing how she' s fallen among the plants,
from seeing how she gets away from the beasts,
from hearing how we say: It' s Death!
From wounding our greatest interests!

(Because her liver manufactures the drop I' ve mentioned, comrade;
because she eats the soul of our neighbor.)

Call her! We must follow her
to the foot of the enemy tanks,
for death is a being been by force,
whose beginning & end I carry engraved

at the head of my illusions,
even though she would run the normal risk that you,
that you know
& though she would pretend to pretend to ignore me.

Call her! Violent death is not a being,
but, hardly, laconic event;
rather her way tends, when she attacks,
tends toward simple tumult, without orbits or joyous songs;
rather her audacious time tends toward imprecise penny
& her deaf carats, toward despotic applause.
Call her! for by calling her with fury, with figures,
you help her drag her three knees,
as, at times,
at time, global enigmatic fractions hurt & pierce,
as, at times, I touch myself & don't feel myself.

Call her! Hurry! She seeks me
with her cognac, her moral cheekbone,
her accordion steps, her curse.
Call her! The thread of my crying must not be lost.
From her smell up, Oh God my dust, comrade!
From her pus up, Oh God my ferule, lieutenant!
From her magnet down, Oh God my tomb!

/from ESPANA, APARTA DE MI ESTE CALIZ. Translation by Clayton Eshleman & José Rubia Barcia./

Paul Blackburn:

THE SELECTION OF HEAVEN

1. GOD, that it did happen,
that loose now, that
early confirmation
of birds, the texture set in
words, 1945,
a Staten Island beach in early October
here in more than flesh and brick,
9th Street, March 1963.

The clouds were love.
The words we have near 18 years, you
prophesy, it could have been that,
the bullshit
words, if that is what we are then,
that they can
do, come to
Life .
You
put that much life in it, baby,
you know you can' t win (touch
bottom to darkness where)

This grey . soft . overcast . not-quite-rainy day,
that I can
swim my mind in it, swim it in overcast, the sun
tries, and there they are, the birds, my gulls
circle over a street to the North.

In the street below a child' s voice yells

"Kick' m in the nuts.....kick' m in the nuts!"
broadcast :
Allen K. says
you have to let a man have all
/
his balls.
I am afraid he speaks from experience.
And here the small birds sing
speak from experience, outside
my window, come .
And my big birds, my gulls, come
here . I see them here, I
can walk thru it,
swim it.

2.

ROYAL EBONY
is the name of a carbon paper . Is
also title of a poem by Niclolás Guillén.

The smoke rises in a thread, a
curled stream from between
his thumb and forefinger
as he snuffs it out.
We live.
Pity? It
is the waste of their lives.

No. Pity is hate.
Pity is hate.
Pity is hate.

Pity
is
hate.

O, were it so,
or as they say,
were it not so.

3. HOW do we keep any of it
. .
ever? Do you

know what I' m talking about?
You borrow my books
you borrow my bicycle
7:30 A. M. Sunday morning
to ride to Staten Island with
a girlfriend. Yes you know.
.
Love
is different each time we taste it .

4. MESTIZA: brown, olive and black.
Scudding clouds the sun rides against.
The wind wins / brown, olive, and black
wind of bicycle-March against her jacket
shape of her top
revealed /
the legs push . It is not
July, heatwaves rising from a blacktop road,
it is March . the sun wins sometimes,
a few minutes . Staten
Island, yes, my gulls are there, the wind, their
generations later of grandchildren
nesting soon

mestiza : brown, olive and black.

The gulls are white and black
simply / sun
catches the underwing
clouds keep moving
. If you
watch clouds, riding
a bicycle is dizzying

The smoke rises in a thread
from between his thumb
and middlefinger.

5. March 3, 1 A. M. / Kyoto.

After the conversation in two voices
after the poems
a list of objects around you
no
collage but a set of emblems
blazing low as the tea stays hot
growling from the fire
the walls . wood and rock
surround you
your sleeping woman, that
softness . The Harbor Dawn
not preceded by Te Deum....Hand of Fire
not followed by macadam gun-grey as
your own dawn comes /
Buzz
of the plane, hark
Hart, high, small, and distinct
The heart of clay
is shared, baked and
brittle tho it may not break.

That day does break . My
gulls were never further away
than this . The sun
coming and
coming

6. ASHARA :
es la siguiente : a
myth-real term in Japanese:
in Arabic it is the number 10
Color is black . "the warring,
hostile, contentious aspect of the mind"
Black is the crow
from the still-white ground to the
black branch, is
the black of cypress spires in the graveyard of Béziers,
is the blackness of night out across the cut
those two spotlights out, the
hours before dawn
light reading to the cats outside
the cats prowling, the
tape spinning
slowly, at 3 3/4 ips
the cat here in my window
black as hell is, black,
as crow, as cypress, down
into the mind and time suspended is
how this color is, is no color, is
black crow,
black cat, black
cypresses in dawn sky, is
black as black is, is the
sound of sea, the wings flapping.
Gulls are white . Sins . The mind
is
dark .

" Full fathom five thy father lies"
it is
the number 10
Color is black.

7. THE MERE
concordance of these sufferings :
Hannah died.
Tomorrow the funeral in New Bedford, Mass.,
the interment, the last dancing of the coffin,
shadow of birdflight flash across the box, the
ground is cold, should we see it, in Fairhaven --
cross the river, turn
down toward the bay . Hannah
Gibbs Whiting Mackey Blackburn died,
87, after a full life . I,
grandson, 37, (you
gauge there those fifty years, I know
the small dif-
ferences, way they ought, or
not too far wrong --) away
Ruth,
Sarruth.
You are that young,
too young . We never have
until tonite, given
that grey gentleness
to one another . wet, yes,
and why not?
Tell me what else this shoulder might serve for
please, I want to live beyond that
please, the drive back 300 miles
please, the ground is cold, there is
please, no other life, please,
please there IS that
difference, say it

might have been a man but
now, no care, who
could care? it was that dif-
(small dif-)
erence be-
tween the man who filled was
more a child . You can
turn your back
or I can turn my back --
it is a child
unborn, it is our being
all our being
man and wife, or else the rest
of life is Jack the
life is back, is fact, is black, is
rope enuf, is no rope, is the ripper
is the ripper
is the ripper
is the child, un-
born perhaps,
and sucking.

8. Right it should be Harold
does this, that we should,
he drives
out of that town,
I write it down and we go.
It is the sea,
okay, the East River, it
is the sea.
Past Riker' s Island and north
the bridges sweep
west to east, Tri-
boro, Bruckner Blvd., "the
North is of storms"
Kelly, it is mere

spring.
The clouds sit there,
to the
North.

9. The grave half-filled
with earth . EARTH
Two diggers with long-handled spades
smile and joke with one another . The grave
stone faces the bay at Fairhaven
her father sailed from.
She was 87 .
Everybody loved her .

10. IT EXISTS. There ↓
is the very spot to place the ashtray
so that my hand
may reach it without looking while I read
And that is where I place it,
exactly
|
THERE ↓

The 3
brandies I have had after lunch are
exactly
enuf
to create the vulnerability the
translator needs to bring him
open to the text, that other life
than his own /
or how to share
another man's glory, exaltation,
love, penury, lust, 700

years agone, the gap gone,
No, not bridged, baby,
YOU ARE THERE!

Wet roads, the plots, the wars --
Winter is cold, snowdrifts
are exact, or rain comes down,
the birds come, the sun comes,
the lady -- shall we be lucky today, shall
we have opportunity to speak with her?
Only a few words! One could not hope
for years --

4
would have been too many, would have
turned us over into drowsiness 3
exactly sufficed . Smoke
rises in a thread from between his
thumb and middlefinger as
he snuffs it out . continues .

11.

The a of the Ballantine truck, reversed /6
less than 7, twice 3, that
a-6 reversed again reflects upon
the face of a small man in a grey hat
reading the menu in the bakery window
Features recede behind two layers of glass,

the corner of the window
a-6 sits
where his face should be -- is
turns it
to a skull, the man is helpless, it
is his skullface looks in

at my shadow (right) not at me
the number 6 is the number of
fecundity in Mediterranean myth

3 . 7 . 6 . sixteen
a proper age, it is
my own virginity I take
The skull my own
both bodies, hers, given
ashara, it is the number 10
Color is black .
a skull . The 6 is final, the
man is helpless before it .

12. UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT DESERT FLOWERS BLOOMED ALL YEAR

He looked for the flower
in the desert for
9 hours
and did not find it
was
never anywhere but
close to home

I have to take a leak --
he says years later at McSorley' s
and goes . He is still
close to home

13.

LIGHT . LIGHT
the lonely gathered

lovely fucking light
is there, the human reach is
there .

Keep us autonomous,
each man' s control be his own,
his reach what it can be

Governments will die under the bright sun
3000° F-temperatures melt the filing cabinets .

penetrates.
The light in the bathroom changes
because there are two windows, be-
cause I keep my plants there.

The work will be done, my brothers.
Our loves are public knowledge .
The light is soft, and green, it, yes,

penetrates .
Join us .

14.

Moving always from West to East
how my tribe moves at last,

I have come to the black mountain
I have come to the end of the world

I shall climb
I have to climb the mountain
at the end of the world, the
black mountain, to meet the
7 white dogs

coming down toward me . trotting,
the rain of pebbles and dirt
the number 10 is broken

to 7 and 3 . the color black
smashes into the primary colors
3, the light
is white, say
it is my own virginity I take .

15.

Hannah died Mar 23, 1963
John Henry, April 17

NY, New Haven & Hartford

"All tickets please!"

The ivy is green on the walls, small
tender leaves,
forsythia along the tracks, chestnut, magnolia trees
Woodlawn Cemetery,
the way up .
The burgeoning green that is so full and quick is
willows, looks
yellow in sunlight . Water
comes from the rock .

John Henry survived Hannah twenty-five days,
would wander about that section of the rest home
peering into the empty room.
"I can't seem to find my wife."
They'd tell him his wife had died
and he'd remember that for five minutes.

The last day the 17th, his
daughter Pearl sat by him
while he ate . While he ate
with his right hand, he
held her hand with his left . the heart hand .
The heart stopped
just before midnight.

Now the weekend. It' s going to take
three days to bury him.
Showing the body tonight,
the service tomorrow.
Put him in the
ground on Monday at dawn.
Gravediggers won' t work on Sunday
even for double-pay .

16. w o r d s : should have been spoken at graveside

There are no true voices anymore, John
Henry, you knucklehead, you hard-
headed, stiff-backed, tough-minded old man, your
mouth is clenched tight for good
it is a solid line

from under your sharpened nose around your pointed chin,
above that
the strong, kind, (remembered), and finally closed eyes,
the dead tissues under the skull that were your brain
softened finally with your 88 years

into a forgetfulness your children could
relate to, could pity, could and did
expiate themselves upon, so

accept their own lives

for what they had become or grown to,
John, you knucklehead, you bonehead, in
the old photographs you are more often
scowling, when the others
are smiling bravely into the bright sun.

You quarreled
with everyone you loved and were proud
when your children fought you back with brain and spirit
and were hurt, of course you were hurt
by it, and loved them . You
had made them irrevocably yours you would have said God' s

and that' s not true, and your mouth is closed for good
upon the air of this world, your hands not
folded in eternity as that
cliché-ridden, pompous, minister
friend of yours who did you final service might
have said had he the gift of words, but
clenched, holding your heaven to you;
swollen farmer' s hands that had been kinder than your mind
was clenched in eternity the rock of your mind
that could not crack and open but
still clenched dissolved under the rain of years

the head still,
straight white hair still handsome . 4
generations gathered round a coffin yesterday to pay
what truly was respect and sometimes love, the
different qualities of flesh
from ruined to what
renews itself each day, and grows, John,
stood there and did you honor . Rocks

wear away under the rain . Flesh is tough
the spirit

resilient . tougher than flesh . They
said you looked natural
and in their mouths it
was comforting cliché . The words
were truer than they knew, you still looked
stiff-backed, hard-headed,
but the spirit gone, that blur,
a peace .

E A R T H T O E A R T H

GOD,
be here at this graveside .
Not in the cut flowers the undertaker's men heaped up
but in the new forsythia, red maple
buds, magnolia, be
in the spring earth
will heap this grave, grow new grass over it,
golden green of willow starting fresh . be
in the spring earth with John,
your faithful servant,
where he will lie
next to Hannah as he did in life, her
eternal lover . Lock them
forever into this hillside
facing the Acushnet gulls settle on,
wheel over crying, hear them in the
distance .

Smoke rises
from between my forefinger
and middlefinger . Wind on this
cold spring hillside sweeps it off
barely visible in the sunlight

the ashes
fall upon new grass .

A S H E S T O A S H E S

John,
forgive the carpet of phoney grass
too dark for the season
the undertakers spread beneath your
coffin for this moment . We have
seen you to this hillside, let it be
enough . Forgive
the Reverend Doctor his recitation
of 2 Edgar Guest poems yesterday, I
figured I could stand it if you could . The rain
of dirt and pebbles will be real enough .
fresh clods set in
after you have settled . Rain
fructifies,
but will wear away .
ROCK
The committing ceremony had the
dignity of its own
words, yesterday,
despite the use of flowers with their snapped-off heads
instead of fistfuls of earth . EARTH .
When the diggers end the job, let
the first 3 shovelsful of spring earth
be my shovelsful, let it be enough .

D U S T T O D U S T

consigning . I
have not willed the occasion for these words
which cry themselves like hunting gulls
my mouth flapping open . GOD,
welcome your servant John Henry
into whatever Paradise he thought existed,
offer him
the best accomodation that you have for such a
lover of the mind . God

knows he has earned it,
twice over .

Let there be soft
wind
where he is, let him hear gulls cry
above the
bridge,
and be home.

17.

The mind returns to it always
a machine gone insane, the senses
tamped down, turn the dial to -1
that kind of death .

The dead man sits at the table
a dead cigarette in his mouth,
drinks, the mind-gears turn
repetitiously over the same materials,
the same images return, murderously.
He sits and looks at them again and again.
The smashed glass, her high at the party, a
pickup truck, an empty road, sound of the man's voice,
of his own as from a taperecorder far off and drunk,
cannot recognize the sound of his own voice, the
sleeping bag on one can find, a pink poppy beside the chair,
the cat
jumps into his lap
wanting, not food, but love,
the glass knocked over, the
second glass thrown at that exact spot .

Admit: it had been a long time preparing,
now a long time gone. Nothing just happens. But

to cut onesself down when
there' s nothing left to manipulate but the impulse to murder?

Solid panic is a state of normality
when you cannot blame anyone, not even yourself.
Just the fact, THE FACT!
Go over it step by step, repeat, go
over it in utter despair, turn
the mind-machine on, let it run,
feed the data into the computer,
whirr-
whirr .
-- Can you tell me what difference it makes?
-- Yes. None.
-- You' re a food.
-- You' re another!

Dust devils spin down the road.
Every 10th building, every 5th
corner, every 2nd
mountain is the knife . How
recover the town to himself
-- no, not with her -- for
his own annihilated, powerless, murderous self? How
give up any thought of final recovery
any victory, even over himself?
give up even the defeat and sit
at a wooden table in a strange
land, murdering flies dully
with a flyswatter and his left hand?

How come to it with the inexhaustible world of phantoms on
his back
pressing in the repetitious fact -- nothing
he can say or do
will make the slightest difference to her?

Going OVER that road step by step

until he knows it like his broken hand,
living symbol of his impotence,
a right arm broken in two places, and
everytime there' s a twinge in the interosteol musculature, the

pickup truck will return, with the
sound of a glass smashing, with
the hysterical vision of a wet rock
and a pink flower in the identical spot a week later .

So he murders flies, throws
the dead cigarette away and lights
another.

A sweet potato
in water
in the bowl in front of him
grows into a forest of green, cuneate leaves,
al-most unbelievably .
From every eye of the insert thing, dark
blooded stems growing pale toward the top
rise,
then the leaves,
light green on the younger ones, dark green on the rest,
all turned
toward the light from the kitchen window .
A jungle rises out of that inert potato
not/dead, clearly, tho it not move .

O, L O V E !
Smoke
rises from between the first and middle fingers of his left hand
which came to life,
so passive it was before .
He rises and opens the door to a
courtyard full of trees and birds.
Sounds of the wakening city come in .

But the laurel has one pink blossom. He

returns to the chair
& murders a few more flies .

*

Fielding Dawson:

THE SINGING MAN

There is a man in my neighborhood who makes his deliveries on foot, and sings as he walks, pushing his hand truck in the streets and on sidewalks.

He is a large black man, and as he pushes his handtruck along he throws back his head and sings. Loud.

In all seasons, as trucks line both sides of the streets, and deliveries and pickups are made and the man who sings is the object of a lot of response and the victim of a million silent and spoken jokes, but there is no stopping him, because he really loves to sing; he' s been singing for years, and Puerto Rican and black guys more or less let him be, in their way, which is not completely. Secretly they like him, and envy him, admire him, and learn from him, because they can tell how far removed they are from their own when his singing embarrasses them, so in reaction to their own embarrassment in awe, SING it, baby, and laugh, WAIL! because he definitely embarrasses white truckers and delivery boys and businessmen.

He comes around the corner -- everyone hears him coming, and all heads turn, and the true emotions are replaced by more reasonable emotions turned a little to the right of embarrassment, into togetherness, and all the guys grin and wink at each other, as the singing man takes the corner and hoves into view, dodging traffic up the street toward them expertly, he just as they in traffic, except he' ll be singing.

White businessmen and women avoid him because they are twice embarrassed first in the eyes of black truckdrivers, stockmen and delivery boys, which embarrassment white people imagine black people reject, and then, or really originally

being embarrassed because a man is singing in the street, and nobody sings in the streets, who sings in the street? Whaddya crazy on the street, singin' ya dummy, and as the black and Puerto Rican guys yell at him -- the singing man -- their laughter is more tense, and the white man thinks they laugh and yell obliquely at him, true, because they see he is embarrassed, but also, which has a unifying quality, for release from their own embarrassment, but what upsets the black guys is not only his singing in the street, which is embarrassing enough as he is black, and they think white businessmen think he is an extension of them because he and they are black, as if the businessmen see right through him to them, make an on the spot identification, and expect them, maybe, praying not, but possibly expecting them all to burst into song, so they shout and yell at the singing man to let the white businessman know the singing man is different from their point of view, too, yet while being one of them, in the sense anybody can see this guy' s just gotta sing, which is a black fact, maybe, and the white businessman sees through him to them, unconvinced, and the black guys yell back through him at the white man, it' s a street game anyway, and constant, but the singing man is special, because the real suspense is not only in the loud voice he uses, but that with his loud, booming, voice, he can make the air crinkle, and the street turn into a skyscraper embarrassment because of what he sings, he has a nice voice, resonant, and yet he forgets the words, and can' t carry into the range the melody needs, yet though his range is limited, his lungs are not, his songs are a seizing of words behind (or in front of) melodies, and when he forgets the words he improvises on the melody which is limited, a sort of behind hum, mouth open, head back, as a loud rising vine, especially when he is carried away, the melody chasing the hum upwards it' s all he can do, and everybody is with him, helplessly, he makes a choked screek in his throat, he can go no further, higher, and everybody on the street is up in the air with him, as he lowers his head, frowns at the pavement, while everybody else is adjusting, and near hiccups in a wild embarrassment because not only

does everybody know the words he has forgotten, and certainly the melody, but everybody wants to forget it all -- the whole thing -- because his songs, in this day and age, unleash rage and revolution, or an embarrassment hard to rationalize, having been drawn from the pens of men who lived in a former age literally no one wants to recall, except the most hardened bigots, sentimental cynics, and the lost and irrelevant sleepwalkers, and so when he comes striding up Park Avenue South, and swings west on 19th Street bellowing Old Man River, a silence like a suddenly empty water hole, crystallizes, and forms a hard edge, and especially sharpens when he gets to that point in the song where, as we all know him, he can't remember the words, and we all know the words, and yet as he appears in no way aware of anything amiss, his habit is to make no effort to be sure to remember not to forget, or learn, those words, why? it is his way and so he goes back to the beginning and starts over, Old Man River, booming, Old Man River, imminent explosion, Old Man River air pervades the street until he catches a phrase, follows it, gets carried away, peaks, and in collective suction, falls silent, mind running around trying to get that or those words in a high-energy perplexity as audible as Mack trucks, head lowered, he searches beneath him, and then, as a fresh breath, an inspiration! he throws back his head, and in a rolling gusto, loudly attenuates Old Man River with all the spirit of a profound rememberance, in an unexpected vitality, and obvious pleasure, Ooold Mannn Riverr, and everybody on the street, save some startled stranger, is relieved, for a repetition is better than that tense silence, and they go on with their work, yet in his not remembering, the singing man can carry a prolonged and terrific, volatile silence, as he hunts what he suspects he forgets, which he never knew, and which he'll never remember, and as he is midblock everybody on the street adjusts in the aftermath of embarrassment -- a relief to the empathy of helping him find the words to a song nobody wants to remember, and as he approaches Broadway, on his way west, when he begins to sing again, his refrain again, it has an odd quality, like an echo in the empty

following embarrassment, on the air, in the racket of machines.

Well, he smiles when he sings, and as he is a big man, he lifts his head and fills his lungs to renew his singing, a spectacle as he has the chance to gaze at the available strip of sky, and skyline, and smile his personal message that all' s right with the world, to him. His eyes shine, and his shoulders move a little, he tosses his head and he begins to sing. But the song which he sings best, and he only knows a few words to it, and only a part of the melody, but what he knows sends him into a bellowing ecstasy, and the second octave, of Danny Boy. Danny Boy is his song of songs.

One afternoon before Christmas, I was heading uptown on Union Square West, and under an overcast near-snow sky, I saw him walking along in a rather shabby black topcoat, a meager dark brown scarf, bare headed and hand pushing his hand truck with a couple of boxes on it to be delivered evidently in my neighborhood. His shoulders were moving, his head was back, and his open throat cast the melody and the words of Danny Boy to the clouds, as he passed through a throng of people, an illegal fruit-seller, and that tightlipped slit-eyed newspaper man and his rubbermouthed wide-eyed short pal, at the entrance to the BMT subway there. Just this side of the statue of Lincoln, in Union Square.

The singing man passed them by, not seeing them as they watched, because he was singing his song, and when he smiled up into the late cold December sky, and gazed along the dramatic northern skyline of Union Square, he had the words he wanted and plenty of melody, and I saw vapor come from between his lips in the formation of words to Danny Boy, as he moved between bodies and machines, everyone aware of him, the street game was on, but he was aware of nothing but his song; I watched, on an angle from him, as he went, and I was aware of it all, being touched by that singing man.

Oh, Danny Boy, he sang; the words came out of his throat like a call, I hear the pipes are playin' , he sang, oh Danny Boy, that figure in the distance which perpetually separates, which distance separates, I mean, from his booming

calling cry Oh, Danny Boy, he warmly drew the words, and softly, beautifully sung I hear the pipes are playin', and his voice rose and broke in the second octave of Boy, after Danny, he lowered his head and I lost him in the crowd, but found him again, as he raised it, in the dense and complicated distance, heading towards 18th Street, and Park Avenue South, as he began to sing, again.

*

Theodore Enslin:

SYNTHESIS,
8.

Or --
why should man berate himself?
He feels what he must feel
but cannot accept---
what is most his own.
Experience, poor teacher,
holds
all of us.
If my nose is pressed
against the glass
I become a pariah,
or if I am bruised
I feel the pain of it.
I do not respond
to lives I do not live.
My best will denies it:
That I love but go on living.
I will know your pain,
dear friends,
only through my own.
And of
empathy I will say this,
that I wish I knew more of it---
what it means, or how it binds---
that your pain is mine,
or mine yours---that it comes
as divinity---a carefully
measured wound,
the witchcraft of feeling

which does move between
stays perilous
before it binds and locks
those who love
in health and disease.
The riches resounded,
as these create a world
where numbers do not count---
pain and pleasure do.
(As any dainty knight
who pricked a plain)
then: God damn it!
It hurts.
As love must hurt,
believe and feel,
turn to
what will heal
belief
and healing.

(A skein of hair
--clouds--
falling
or failing
the first fine seethe
of snow.)

Or to follow it:
another part of the kingdom,
to find it,
one step back
into the shadows.

The man who said:
Constantine "In arts and sciences
Hering the majority have no right to rule,"
hit it exactly,

and that all things are
in a sense
arts and sciences
gives pause.
I think of these things,
of the wrecks strewn
everywhere---
the footprints of a herd,
insensitive and unknowing.
Listen for the one voice
which will scream
its agony and its warning
(later its defiance.)
A tension building,
if only between
two
juxtaposed
thumbs.
To play it by ear
completes the sense,
a far journey from flying blind.
Problems of our own
doing
and not doing
proposed.
Still, the refusal
to follow a herd:
To do in majesty.
The risk of the poem --
that it is highly pre-
carious,
but further,
the most serious act
of our lives:
To fix
what was tentative
without it.
And there is fear

in it---
not fear
of a failure,
but that
a priori
we have
failed
that
we are dead
already
if not buried.
And it will be
some time
yet
before I am able
to write
the window poem
without
a desperate catch
at what comes
almost
but never
quite.
As if there were re-
flections
from a window
far off---
or perhaps
the illusion
in a mirror
through which no light
makes it.

There are days
and many nights
of wondering
completion
and disregard

for
what might be completed.
I ask questions,
receive questions
as answers.
So much rhetoric.
And the acts?
-- rhetorical --
complete only the words.
It is a fortune
lit by hesitance, yet
fortune
at times
completes it---
a memory
of what
was said
in saying
not so.

HOO -- ah
A puff of smoke,
an act of deceit.
And a scream into the wind
which screams its own
purposes.
(I' d rather guess.)

The risk of the poem---
which is what I wanted
to say about it,
opens to chance---
and then---
more than chance.

By reason of strength
which is
the strength of days.

I rise into the morning,
clear as to what I must do,
but clouding by noontime.
I go to bed in storm,
uncertainty,
and a darkness
which overcomes
me,
as it overcomes the spirit.
It reduces the day,
as I am reduced.
And the night sounds long
in groaning winds.
HOO ah!

(The bits of truth
sift down,
, a holy snow,
but warmer,
in freezing weather.
Completion
is no word
for it,
nor even the risk---
exactly as it stands
outside our time---
within
the---
sift
it
down.)

As all great art
is a prefiguring
of all that is yet to come:
(K. 499 and Schubert)

creates times
and times again,
the summing up
of future,
all else
which is past,
which flows forward
outside
and inside.
Make mention---
go out
and
return.

" The fate of the day---"
extended
in its own fashion,
but fashioned
as wrought
within senses of our times,
each contained---his own day---
can mean the difference
between
that man
walking through grass
which deepens
eventually
over
whelms
him,
and the voice
of the frog
Philip within his element
Upham who says:
' If I were where you are
I could move out

at will---
my own will.
You cannot.'
It is this spelling out---
the eternal line
which becomes:

William Gutman

" The fate of the day
is in our own hands."
which does not deny
fate:
'Es muss' sein.'
And:
it occurs.
A non-scientific attitude
is what is needed
to make a science.
Nicht wahr?
The only possibility
for certain similars
arising
through enantiosis.
Do not wonder further.
Put out your eyes,
if you decide to read.
(And be not perverse
as you
go about it.)

To break the pattern,
which is what makes
the pattern clear,
as death's the switchman
on this, or any, track.
Breaking the glass
for marriage,
or the skull
for wholeness.
I do no

more than dream these days.
Opening
behest.
Yes -- then --
you
will.

It is hard to go
beyond certain words,
as it is always possible
to go beyond action.
No paradox.
An entrance.
A dimension
supersedes,
but it is
in each case
a separate dimension.
Composure
creates
a ferment.
Have you no
ideas?
It is late
and
this subject
cannot remain closed
for long.
(as fruit flies
hatch overnight.)
Believe,
but not
necessarily
or only
these words.
Ha!
a take-up
so

quickly.
(It is not temperature,
merely,
which makes a winter.)

Musculature,
(what is there,
not what is flexed
or developed.)
Broadening the base,
harshly clearing
as if the brush
would open
for me.
Aimless.
And the attempt
to bring by ear
what the hand
may not do---
days of discomfiture.
It may be this
as guide,
connective to the reach:
"Nothing foreign enters
Huginus of
Barmen
our work;
it will not admit and
will not receive
anything that comes
from elsewhere."
Linking myself
with the outside
I tell myself
the center:
Hold to it.
The sun helps,
though it is still
as cold,
perhaps colder,

since at this season
the second hour
after sunrise
is likely to be
the coldest of the day.
There is still the
urgency,
fires to tend---
and fires in my head
which it will not do
to slacken.
Watch it---
this is when the
difference between
heating and overheating
can be the worst,
and last night
that urgency made me
angry,
woke me out of an earlier
context,
where I felt old,
used,
around a long time
with worn edges,
as I would not like to be.
The anger fixed it,
and now this cold morning
that the sun helps.

If I were
(willing)
to "sell my dreams"
I would be sold,
from myself,
and the diminished man
would not recover.
Nor to write this out

on an angry morning---
(hint of fresh snow)
will rub out
the implication.
How often does a man
touch bottom?
or does it mean
a thing
other than descent---
a toehold
respite?
Make for that
more than a moment's
dalliance---
the attention
being universal:
Once to think it out,
and once to write it.
I commission myself,
and move to patronage---
the idea---
or the ideal.
Compressed
the lips,
and the gangling growth---
thought or mood.
Certain daily things,
it will not do
to begin them until
the sun rises---
corners which remain dark,
impossible to come by
in smaller hours.

What I see, I see.
Hardly come by,
and out the door
with impressions

so
much dust.
That the materials
are the work itself,
and the life.
We do not change
them,
nor ourselves,
attempting to live
through breath and illusion.
A full green harvest
in the nearest graveyard.
Attempt no more.
Settle
with no less.

The art of the key
turned
comes to
whatever I imprison
holds me
tighter.
I am no victor
in these things.
Circled
and bound
tight.
The just deserts
of such a jailer.
Nor is it to change places.
What I hold
is freer than I am.

Nor will I
un believing
tempt fate
with sadness
or impressions

other than those
of tangible things
which burn
hot
    or
        cold.
Creating a fusion
from these things:
The man whom I see
before me
is no longer a man,
or, at least, not the man
I knew in other years.
He has changed,
as he would tell me;
but I have changed in ways
he cannot know,
nor for all his assurances
do I know him.
The sadness of our
friendship,
spoken and unspoken,
the span of years
held in the crook
of either hand,
and no more to be said
about it.
He will not ask me
things which are painful,
but they will be implied
in our meetings---
                the sense
between
        us.
Perhaps I should not speak
to, or around him,
but pass on.

(And these words were given
without choice.
I cannot deny them,
nor live without them.)
Next to the
heart of the matter
is the true heart;
(as there is the north
and the magnetic
north.)
Of these two,
one beats
fully
        the other
grate
        fully.

Reflections
                come
as the seeding
of this rain.
Gradual
            hesitant
and fleeing
                outward
inward
            an old song
by new degrees.
If I should walk here
I would know---.
Oh, the stop of the mouth
is dust---
and a desertful
had for less than the
asking.

(When does a man
eat at the heart

beneath?
It is then he steps
out of himself---
lost forever---
and losing
what, perchance,
he had once
and left.
The shyness of
his walk---
the evil that must
walk within him.)

Take care---
there are shadows,
and of the shadows
substance
in another place.
No man,
no man,
and an old song
made new
for vision,
or the fortune
of not seeing.

And then I rose
in the morning,
seeing what I saw,
believing,
but forgotten
in belief.
Jealousy,
that old fake,
exists only
in the minds
of those who have
lost already---

and for all time.

Or freedom to act,
that which
we deny ourselves
in every contact,
yet would not be pure,
as purity means
not death
but an end.

Completion of one
sort
or another.
To say
in marking
the snow wind---
the place
in which
I will not be cast,
as I am
cast out.

How
it sounds
depends upon the ear,
(it is not right to speak
of mood)
and the ear
must come through.
Or tears which dissolve
the glass splinter
lodged in the heart,
which may/may not alter
feeling.
Hearing, too.
The fragile sound
become rich

strong with the wine
of the new year,
before its vine
has grown.
I would like to---
in haste---
but---
I---
would like to.
And the sound
will not be trifled with,
nor the completion.
As the voice of the poet
who continually asks:
how?

Denis Goacher

Or a spell:

Pudding stone,
pudding stone,
the rind
bear me---
bear my wound.
Mark of pudding stone
forfend us.

How like a woman,
the in-
decision,
which charms
in its fragility,
as it is of woman,
but must be met
at times,
challenged
and overturned.
That the
woman learns:

you learn
that no one
(wisely)
hangs another on waiting.
The time will soon be gone,
nothing left
except the breath---
a smoke in the air.
Still,
you may reverse it
at any time.
I go, knowing it,
into my exile,
and cursing the darkness.

Or of the polite spell,
which may be called sleep
for want of better words:
There is nothing to be had
except sleep
without dreams.
It may blot out
other discomforts,
be used as other
forms of sickness---
a weapon of the defenseless.
It will save listening --
but the dream
comes through.

(The tell-tale snap,
sleet against the windows.
I no longer
dare
look through,
as daring
will be to live,
and I have chosen death.)

Whatever it is to break
against and against,
through,
as if the splinter
would not melt,
could not be removed
by means other than death.

A dominance---
the strong key---
say, D Major,
what it can mean
as a bestower of health---
as that which
is,
which survives,
or
departs
leaving
life.

The first rays of the sun
strik -
ing
in front of the icicle,
illumine it from behind---
as if the lights there
were stronger,
as the recapitulation
of what has gone before
seems to follow
the end
in a dominant key.

The pressures of the ordinary
become

sharp stones.
They refuse admittance
to their accumulation,
guilt and disease,
which must be left
to see a world
beyond
them.
Few go there,
taking
the ordinary
for the normal.
Shaking and sighing,
but with little movement
out of it
beyond the breadth
of a midden,
a place to sleep,
a corner to eat in,
one to drop shit,
and a final place to die
under one roof
with few windows.
The world goes its passage here.
A few walk out
slamming the door.

I presume too much.
There are those who listen,
and become
distracted,
turned away
from worlds they find
too difficult.
I cannot blame them.
Theirs is too difficult
for me.
(I cannot look

without impatience
no comprehension
at their enginery.
It is not mine.)
There is no residue
of praise or blame.
When into that wood---
I could almost quote
what stops me most.
The times are not angry,
but set on edge,
foreshortened
thinner
than they might be.
But the common words of caution
used as hail and farewell,
and not meant,
grate against me.

Never to confuse
time with space,
nor the place
where they do
impinge,
later,
coincide.

The beginning of that loneliness---
not that the night
(in itself)
is cruel.
It was spoken
in the bright
metallic clatter---
an icicle breaking in the wind.
A glad sound

which said
its hopelessness.
"She is not here."
So, throwing another log
on the fire,
a smile which is
(not exactly)
hopeless,
as one sits and thinks
in winter.
A season when one goes
(rarely)
to bed.

Or two faces of the same
optimism,
which I distrust
as much as it dislikes me.
(incurable maker of songs:)

With the best will
in the world---
cry you
mercy, sirs,
what will
is that?
and are there dangers
relative to it?

Complete!
My case
is complete!
Here let it
rest,
if it will,
or if,
relentless ghost,
it doesn't visit me

tonight:
Horns and all.

Yes,
and one never knows---
the night was fine,
the morning dull,
followed by storm.
Carving the difference
from a hollow in the hill---
attempting---
too much,
and too much against us,
which is to say the same
things that others have said
in more positive ways,
of more negative ends.
Cursing the darkness
removes nothing but the curse.

Emptiness.
A straining
at blank walls
or
a heap of rusty beer cans.

"One wonders---"
what is it
that one wonders about?
Could be,
or could not.
The anger,
the disillusion-
ment
in the places
where it should not be.
Still, one wonders---
movement forward and back.

The ends become
not
difficult
but ridiculous.
Anticlimax is no
strong word for it.
Tolstoy As death in a railway station,
or life with no sense
or principle
except for
the excretion of garbage.
One wonders,
one rails,
one beats with a mailed fist---
his own head.

The darkness is reward,
or softening,
so that ends may not be seen.
So that---
you have news of me---
not that there is news
worth the talk of it,
but that the talk
and worth of talk
goes on,
embers
from which to stir new fire.
One day,
a thing to stir from it.

The wisdom of the day---
quite other than the wisdom
brought to it:
What fills up
the spaces which remain
in front of us always,
fears and

terrors---
the breaking on the wheel.
Snapped like flax.

Completing a step
as if it were more than a print
followed by that
which is sensitive to it.
It does not complete,
and in the midnight of the heart,
sicut erat in principio.
No, I can quote it,
but not believe in it.
The road grew up
years past,
A place to walk
waveringly.
And
before I lose it,
I had better reach for it.

Something alien---
What is?
What is.
(Or is it?)
That green skill at turning things
which do relate,
away from us
to where they do not,
and are buried in an undersea
alive with things
unreal to us---
which are not fish,
and are not trees:
Anemones,
the soul bared,
flesh and leaf
which take

the water in
the water out,
for want of blood or sap,
and are not ours,
but become
ours if we make them so.
It was hard to say this,
harder to impress it on
myself.
It is not the will
and not acceptance.
Something alien.
I believe.
I cannot know.

Redemption is the act of a moment,
the act of another
destroys it.
There is silence
and the following
whispering---
dust falling
from desert mountains.
A walk in the dry places,
thirst and want.
We will have known this.
We will know---
Wind blows from the north.
The air is thin.
Gather the skirts of an old coat
over starved bones.
In a vision, there is fire
none to put it out.

Wink of a star,
it is only the wink
of my eye.
The light is constant.

Composed
and here we lie,
asking for the death
which has not yet come.
The almsman walks
streets of terror.
Visions
and no reality.
A cold night:
what will creep
inside?
The sense of darkness
everywhere,
survivals underground
and out of the wind.
No one there?
Well---
brother---
the numb heart of the steppe.
high
piercing
cry
(but not loud)
the winter birds
scanning the snow---
a little field seed
to warm them.
Wrenched from its context
who will know
what I say?
A length of days---
certain numbers,
did they come?
or did they once destroy me?
Eventually I heard an echo,
but it was the shell
of my own exile,
not another voice.

A pruning wind
shears the branches,
clutters the surface of blown snow,
wanders in and out
of the house,
bruises to the bone,
yet
is a good wind
for all its evil laughter.
I will be grateful for what
I know of it---
so may you and you---
those to whom I talk
on a cold night,
unnaturally lit
by a natural moon---
the enthusiasms
of the moment.
Take it
for what it is
welcomed,
and sent
god speed
bon voyage
Bienvenue.

Corrective
of what?
Most, I spoke of death,
but it was death within
the living of it.
Brighter than that,
I will sing praises,
remember one man
who had a talisman,
and I, another:
A similar.

Hayden Carruth:

PARAGRAPHS, 1 - 5

Begin right here. Campground Road. Some calls it
the Hogback, but that' s up higher. Here' s the river.
And there' s Vermont, all ridge and valley,
all cockeyed -- seem' z' o. Over
acrost is the hayth-o-land, Whiteface and all,
Madonna, Mansfield. Butternut' s back here. And Baldy
Langdell' s uncle' s place was right there,
him that set up his house as square
as his own square Yankee head afore he died and Baldy
died and Old
Jimmy and Hank Rago
King, Malcolm, Jackson and all/
all in a breath of years.
A cold wind,
old and cold,
sprung these waterdrops from a bare birch bough,
lightdrops scattering to the edge
of a pool of darkness. Or say we could glimpse
Vivaldi' s parchment now,
his hand flinging down a bright arpeggio . . .

Keep going. There' s nothing else to do. Past
a few farms left, Manchester' s, Jones' s.
Past brutishness newly done since last
I drove here, sliced stone,
the eviserated hills. And then the worst,

these superadded trailers, this prefab, damned fashion
out of Monterey or Bronxville, God knows where --
the national mean taking over. Or
the mean nationals.

Keep going, Waterville
to Johnson. I'd have thought
(almost) this was too tough, they couldn't spoil it,
ridge and riverbottom, massed heights,
granitic Vermont. But they've walked on Kailas
and thrown
town dirt on snow-bright Sati,
they've exulted
before Kali. They've put their feet on the moon.

Ithiel Falls, below the Nazarene campground. A name
clinging to its old place. The falls were blown out
in a WPA so-called work program,
1934 I think, to avert
another flood like '27, that was dank doom
to one Johnsonian family and a gaping bedlam
of other Vermonters too; but the dynamite
was fool's work, wasted. What
caused the flood was a jam at the narrow crest
of the falls where old covered bridges,
floated from their abutments by the torrent, came to rest,
creating a dam. But the new bridges
they built then were ironwork that would never float
on anything, not even on the presages
of old men's rememberings. So why were the falls blown out?

Why were the great auks exterminated? Sometimes
I dream of those bridges; downriver on the flood,
shapes in dark water, awash and lumbering.
Why did the beatitude
who shot the last otter in Otter Creek come home
bragging? I dream how they yawed and stumbled,
how they wallowed almost but not quite like the huge
Jurassic animals caught in the deluge.
Why were the braves castrated, the stretched squaws
bayoneted up their vaginas?
Bridges are only bridges, that' s all, bumping along,
spandrel and truss,
post, brace, beam --
arks
of a minor people, a time too small for grief,
cracking, foundering, gone in the rain-drenched dark.
I grow old, my dreams are factual and brief.

Not night now. Dawn. Six o' clock, a November morning.
But raining still. I stop. In the blown falls the river
sinks on a long grade, curling
through the dogleg. I lower
my window. Rain hisses on the coarse snow remaining
from yesterday' s freeze where broken stems of mullen
fence the ditch. A grove of popples,
grayish-green, is a drabness opposite,
with one stark white bitch outstanding. A jay,
slanting tidily across the water
to a low bough, jeers as he goes. Way away,
way in the east, beyond our boarded up
Nazarenes, the sun struggles in a fog.

Once at Walden
it was the " morning star" calling us to the order
of this world.
Tell me Henry David are you still called?

Carl Thayler:

2 sections from THE YARD

...

A small rotunda a warp
in the cement behind
the school building
a handrail bronze curve a space
my body hangs out into handstand
the schoolyard
two flights below
the distance is more than goes
out any eye, to fences

my Lobo gang brothers under
the peppertreed bench only we could sit on
eating lunch, apart, laughter the antiphon
of obsessive space
there is no circulating in, among others
a green and white jacket
reflexive hierarchy
indistinct as
loam my blood mixes with
heavy tits hung into water
dugs of mine
my brothers suck at, around
chewed towel at football half-time & the Heap
our cartoon of grace
romps about the schoolyard where
truly we are expelled into

I lifted love-notes the queers left
off GOODRICH' s shower room
gymnasium I swept evenings

slept on benches

strands of muscle
fiber one end of
still knotted in that tree
I feared to fall from
image I couldn't live, preferring
deadlift . pinnacle
I stood at
grinning into the Mr. Los Angeles contest audience,
1950
my apprenticeship the aesthetics
of a violence so compacted
my art has always been
to set apart
the Goodrich shower room homosexual
a cheap radio he had hold of. Mine
he said, I shoved him. He said not my radio.
It was a bare room. The glass. The blood
of others I learned also
is borne away
the grey-white branch
ragged over the stairs

...

The headache untangled
from the delicate junctures
of the head would assume
its own immutable form
forever

think of this migraine
as a kind of moth
obsessively
pelting
with attenuated clots of wing

the air above my head
only small smudges
but constant,
when they fasten upon me
they assimilate me

the experience I call mine
the body' s slough
images in the astringent unstable bundle
where all the mileage is,
the heavy corrugated suit
glinting whitely
on the closet door
surrounded by dogs and unflinching

for the experience I call mine
there is no prior necessity
no Self required

and yet the orange that is an orange remains
even should it be one like those
I was surrounded by in California
their green rinds
all the weight they had.

Muscles posed like lopped off 1950' s Black Dahlia
murder breasts aureoled in Rembrandt deathlight
which is submission goes past misuse
no person' s body
can be background of

ripple of intractable muscle
cock out of open fly
so swaddled the metaphor of this poem
my body is not literal
upper arms and torso greased
penis pulled for size
stretched into relief, the whole body

aureoled in showerroom steamwreath
dark cloth draped behind
flashing Athlete Model Guild strobes.

What alterations of Self
to know metaphor? Only ease
of this heaviness I am saturated with
flesh stiff as the leather jacket I traded Dick Molin for
collar turned up in Lido movie theatre dark --
a final solution
not a metaphor,

draws out no feature
from mulch doesn't throw into relief
man's dignity clutching radio to his chest
which is to grasp particulars
know metaphor
sweated for, on the other side of submission --
you are 40 this month -- leave the schoolyard!

March 16, 1973

Gary Snyder: (2 poems

GREASY BOY

Dirt & tatters--dirt rubs off.
rags, rags, rags
tear it up
tear it up
over and over--
dirt, rags--tatters.
the sand blown grim soot
caking under eyes

Tear it up,
dirt and rags,
--tattered--

Let them fly, dirt bits
through the air.
across scab land.

I, I,
for "one"
--not afraid of
death, of
dirt, and,
ragged,
me----death.

I saw the Mother once
at Pondicherry, morning darshan, looking up
til our necks were stiff, as she stared down at the little crowd
dawn street, with a fixed hypnotic smile and painted eyes,
finally backing off the balcony away.
Last night I dreamed again: the Mother
in her room upstairs, sitting on a concrete floor
her legs stuck out in front
like proper Navajo women used to do,
no cushion, someone said, "The Mother."
I went forward and bowed low,
as I was once taught long ago
put my forehead to the floor.
She rubbed my ears,
stroked the neck, and said
.....
.....
.....
I forget.
& then showed me a letter which I read,
one side of the page about myself.
I think it said, "keep calm."
And the other side was all about my wife.
Much about Masa
.....
.....
.....and,
finally,
"dark powers."

Jerome Rothenberg:

COKBOY

Part One

saddlesore I came
a jew among
the indians
vot em I doink in dis strange place
mit deez pipple mit strange eyes
could be it' s trouble
could be could be
(he says) a shadow
ariseth from his buckwheat
has tomahawk in hand
shadow of an axe inside his right eye
of a fountainpen inside his left
vot em I doink here
now vass I lost tzu get here
am a hundred men
a hundred fifty different shadows
jews & gentiles
who bring the Law to Wilderness
(he says) this man
is me my grandfather
& other men-of-letters
men with letters carrying the mail
lithuanian pony-express riders
the financially crazed Buffalo Bill
still riding in the lead
hours before avenging the death of Custer
making the first 3-D movie of those wars
or years before it

the numbers vanishing in kabbalistic time
that brings all men together
& the lonely rider
saddlesore
is me my grandfather
& other men of letters
jews & gentiles entering
the domain of Indian
who bring the Law to Wilderness
in gold mines & shakey stores
the fur trade heavy agriculture
ballots bullets barbers
who threaten my beard your hair
but patronize me
& will make our kind the Senator from Arizona
the champion of their Law
who hates us both
but dresses as a jew one day an Indian
the next a little christian shmuck
vot em I doink here
dis place is maybe crazy
has all the letters going backwards
(he says) so who can read the signboards
to the desert
who can shake his way out of the woods
ford streams the grandmothers
were living near
with snakes inside their cunts
teeth maybe
maybe chainsaws
when the Baal Shem visited America
he wore a shtreiml
the locals all thought he was a cowboy
maybe from Mexico
"a cokboy?"
no a cowboy
I will be more than a credit to my community
& race

but will search for my brother Esau among these redmen
their nocturnal fires I will share
piss strained from my holy cock
will bear seed of Adonoi
& feed them visions
I will fill full a clamshell
will pass it around from mouth to mouth
we will watch the moonrise
through each other's eyes
the distances vanishing in kabbalistic time
(he says) the old man watches
from the cliffs a city
overcome with light
the man & the city disappear
he looks & sees another city
this one is made of glass
inside the buildings stand
immobile statues
brown-skinned faces
catch the light
an elevator
moving up & down
in the vision of the Cuna nele
the vision of my grandfather
vision of the Baal Shem in America
the slaves in steerage
what have they seen in common
by what light their eyes
have opened into stars
I wouldn't know
what I was doing here
this place has all the letters going
backwards a reverse in time
towards wilderness
the old jew strains at his gaberdine
it parts for him
his spirit rushes up the mountainside
& meets an eagle

no an iggle
captains commanders dollinks delicious madmen
murderers opening the continent up to exploitation
cease & desist (he says)
let' s speak (he says)
I feel a little gas down here (he says)
(can' t face the mirror without crying)
& the iggle lifts him
like an elevator
to a safe place above the sunrise
there gives a song to him
the Baal Shem' s song
repeated without words for centuries
"hey heya heya" but translates it
as "yuh-buh-buh-buh-buh-buh-bum"
when the Baal Shem (yuh-buh) learns to do a bundle
what does the Baal Shem (buh-buh) put into the bundle?
silk of his prayershawl-bag beneath
cover of beaverskin above
savor of esrog fruit within
horn of a mountaingoat between
feather of dove around the sides
clove of a Polish garlic at its heart
he wears when traveling
in journeys through kabbalistic forests
cavalry of the Tsars on every side
men with fat moustaches yellow eyes & sabers
who stalk the gentle soul
at night through the Wyoming steppes
(he says) vot em I doink here
I could not find mine het
would search the countryside on hands & knees
until behind a rock in Cody
old Indian steps forth
the prophecies of both join at this point
like smoke a pipe is held
between them dribbles through their lips
the keen tobacco

"cowboy?"
cokboy (says the Baal Shem)
places a walnut in his handkerchief & cracks it
on a boulder each one eats
the Indian draws forth a deck of cards
& shuffles
"game?"
they play at wolves & lambs
the fire crackles in the pripitchok
in a large tent somewhere in America
the story of the coming-forth begins

Part Two

comes a brown
wind curling from
tense tissues sphincter
opened over the whole continental
divide & shot the people up
plop plop a little girl emergeth
she with the beaver tits nose furry
eyes of the Redman's
Sabbath
gropes down the corridor
(sez) hallo doctor
got a hand to spare?
doctor sez hokay
-- yas doctor
-- hev ah suck
-- yas doctor
hand up her bush
he pulls
a baby howling
in lamplight a little Moses
now the Cacique's daughter laugheth
-- oh doctor not so-o hard

so hard America is born
so hard the Baal Shem dreams about it
200 years later
in Vitebsk
(he was in correspondence with Wm Blake
appeared on Peckham Rye
-- yes fully clothed! --
& was his angel)
angel says his mother
smiling proud
she sees his little foot
break through
her crotch an itching
races up her ribs
America is born
the Baal Shem is a beaver
(happened while the Indian talked
chanted behind Cody
the mad Jew slid to life
past pink styrofoam snow of her body's
channels
the freaky passageways
unlit unloved
like gums of an old woman
teeth were ripped from
ages gone) into
another kind of world
he hurtles
does reawaken in the female swamp
a beaver amongst the rushes
-- momma! -- calls the Baal Shem
-- mommeleh!
vot em I doink here
I hev become mine beard
(he sez) the blind world shines on him
water runs through his mouth
down belly it is dark
a darkness (fur is dark

& hides the skin & blood
a universal fur
but leaves one hole
to open from the body' s
darkness pushing
into light)
erupts
like a great cock of the primal beings
red & smooth like copper
of the sun' s red eye at night
old Beaver lugs it in his hand
I am myself
my grandfather
(he sings) my name is Cokboy
-- COKBOY, understand?
I leave my grandmother in the female swamp
will be the Great Deliverer someday yuh-buh-bum
even might find a jar of honey might stick my prick in my
prick might tingle might it not tickle me the bees find
out about it & sting the knob it grows a second a dozen
or so knobs along its length are maybe 30 knobs
so what' s the use I ask maybe will try again I drag it red
& sore behind me so vulnerable I have become in this hot
climate shitting & farting shooting marbles was opening
my mouth & coming in it
the blackbird shits o not so fast love into my hat my eyes
turn white wood-lilies are growing from them a slavic
birth I can' t deny so tender in my eyes tender the native
turds come floating
& across America in an outrage uselessly I shout against
the Sun you are no longer my father Moon you are no
longer my mother I have left you have gone out jaunty
with cock slung over shoulder this is the journey your
young men will take
(says Beaver) makes it to the hut where that old woman lives
apron over her belly carp in oven maybe fried bread fat
fat little mother don' t mind if I drop a stone onto your
brains your daughters be back later little hot girls I

ride on pretending I was you I suck their ears & scream
o put me lower down love o my cock inside
& have to cool it
I cool it
in waters where a princess
daughter of a chief
went bathing
lethal & innocent the cock
has found its mark
(his train has reached Topeka
Custer is dead)
& enters the bridegroom' s quarters
darkness her flesh prepared for it
by new moon
in her abdomen a sliver
grows
a silver dollar over Barstow
lighting the Marriage of America
in kabbalistic time
(says Cokboy) you are the daughter of
the mountain
now will I take thee to my father' s tribe
to do the snake dance
o jewish feet of El go crazy
in his mind
o
El
o
Him
I carry in my knapsack
dirty pictures land grants
(but further back her people
gun for him
how should they feel
seeing their daughter in arms of
Cokboy
-- C - O - C - K, understand? --)
thou art become my Father' s bride

are wedded to (ugh) Christian god
forever
bye bye I got to run now
engagements await us in Salt Lake City
industry riseth everywhere
arrows strike concrete
never shall bruise my sweetie' s flesh
(says Cokboy) on horse
up river he makes his way
past mining camps Polacks were panning gold in
& other pure products of America
o prospectors o Anglo Saxons
baby-faced dumplings who pacified the west
with gattling guns with bounties for hides of babes
mothers' vulvas made baseballs to their lust
o bringers of civilization heros heros
I will fight my way past you who guard the sacred border
last frontier village of my dreams
with shootouts tyrannies
(he cries) who had escaped the law
or brought it with him
how vass I lost tzu get here
(dot dot dot) was luckless
on a mountain & kept from
true entry to the west true paradise
like Moses in the Rockies who stares at California spooky in
the jewish light
of horns atop my head great orange freeways of the mind
America disaster
America disaster
America disaster
America disaster
where he can watch sun go down
in desert
Cokboy asleep? (they ask)
awake (cries Cokboy)
only his beard has left him
like his own his grandfather' s

ghost of Ishi was waiting on the crest
looked like a Jew
but silent
was silent in America
guess I got nothing left to say

*

David Antin:

TO A DISTANT FRIEND

The last day was that of the elephants on which
there was a great deal of astonishment
but no pleasure whatever
for what is the pleasure of a train of six hundred mules in
Clytemnestra
or three thousand bowls in the Trojan Horse
for if in those days you listened to speeches
you surely had more pleasure than us
I don't suppose you wanted to see Greek or Oscan plays
or that you cared about missing the athletes
What pleasure can it be to see a weak man
torn by a powerful beast or a powerful beast transfixed
by a spear
things which
if after all they are worth seeing
you've seen them before
What hope what heart's solace
I want to mention a circumstance that gave me no common
consolation
I was driving to Pomona
behind me was San Clemente and San Juan Capistrano
with the mural on the drive-in movie, Escondido with
its Art Gallery at the junction of route 395 with S6, San
Diego was in back of me, so was Chula Vista, and Bonita, the future capitol of the world, on my right hand
was Hemmet and Indio, and I was just passing Sun City
where thousands of the elderly crouch together in their
settlement just below the road like shellfish in a shallow
bay

I began to reflect to myself thus how come we feel so bad or
angry or forlorn when one of us dies when the corpse of
so many towns is strewn before us in helpless ruin
I realized I was only a man instead of a town and I felt much
better
Not long ago all of the great ones died
and the country is still shaking from the disaster
I try to think of the loss of my own life
as the death of some measly girl who works as a waitress in
a drive-in
I want to go on vacation and drink lots of mineral water
and watch the cars go around and around at Ontario
while I breathe the funny colored air and wave to the
drivers
knowing their risk is no greater than my certainty
still i' ve been able to get my house painted
changing the furniture around from one wall to another
gives you a different perspective
because the bureau with your socks in it is on your left
and not your right hand
and in the mornings things which came easy like finding your
shorts take a moment' s reflection
and for eight days I couldn' t do my pushups because the paint-
er got here too early
and I didn' t feel like having him witness my morning ritual
but the day after tomorrow is part of the beginning of the
weekend and
it' s my house all over again
You will determine as you like
and each man is entitled to make his way up the coast
to throw
his own stone at the President' s house
You are able to bear your bad fortune in your own way
and swimming in the Atlantic Ocean is different from
the Pacific
because the waves all face in the other direction
But let' s be in touch

Clayton Eshleman:

ADHESIVE LOVE

Embracing, fervently embracing, in the embrace itself the bud of imagination is born, as if one was asleep before, suddenly as excitement mounts mind is stimulated, yet this stimulation is felt moving toward orgasm as a part of the physical excitement itself,

it is the creation of the world,

the closed triptych of The Garden of Earthly Delights, the earth swaddled in fog, the light blue ouraboric fog,

orgasm opens the triptych to.

It opens to --

orgasm is not the interior painted surface, but orgasm will rain down on that little bud trembling up to mind, trembling up through the entire body in the fervence of embrace, and after the triptych opens, after I lose control of myself in you, cry out and throb, discharging the phantom of myself, the triptych is open, I lie back, softly head against your sweet breast, my eyes closed I dream into it, the orgasm so intense that I dream awake, often I see a green glade, figures moving about, fields, bright blue skies,

or if my eyes are open

what would otherwise be visual is words, sometimes words from nowhere, words I have never thought, formations, gratitudes, or words I have thought, phrases, near-poems, infused, covered with a wonderful gauze, I smell your sweet breasts, doze, forgetting and remembering.

But of course when I arise I begin again -- I could say the poetry was in those moments of blissful reverie, that what is written down is tragic because it is always in some way an attempt to recover the very instant of inspiration when the image of formation is most bud-like there -- and that is

true for the individual soul. For the individual soul the magnificence is in that rain of embrace contacting the little bud of mind reaching up wanting O wanting to be touched -- it is that touch that tells a man or a woman I AM -- tells them There is something more here than this pleasurable or aching biology. What I call my body or my biology is but a fleck of what I am --

And that reassurance must be given in the bone,

cannot come just as idea, as another's experience -- and when it does come we have a great proud experience, we feel ten feet tall and we fit nowhere, and then we awake into another consciousness that that ten foot arrogance, that great proud dwelling, is just that -- is our individual soul, and if we live by it, if we try to live by it we are as Gulliver in a world of little people -- and to have the soul AND to see beyond the having of it, to have it and to see most other people for the little people they are -- this is the beginning of compassion -- it is unbearable, and the budded soul is trapped by the very consequence of perception outside itself -- for if it stays within itself, knows it is soul, is wetted in fervent embrace and remains there, it becomes moldy and eventually rots; for to be wet is to grow, and the growth is out of the bed, man woman like vine, or any combination of lovers, a great double vine loaded with the vegetation of knowledge slowly climbing, great muscled creeper, green and demanding, out of spore, out and out, until the original pulsation achieves itself, flowers.

So the writing down, the making of art at large, is not really tragic once one sees that the act is accountable to more than the individual soul. For from the viewpoint of my desk the imaginative bud given in embrace turns into fantasy; that is, I am here now, with all my desire, in spite of everything, to say I am -- without you. If you and I, Caryl, get it fully in bed, if the love is genuine and gratifying, then I do not long back to the bed from the desk -- but if the bud did not ignite there, O what a misery it is to be here! What an awful revision, what a re-making and re-making, that collapsed image of creation as masturbation, the poor self-denying soul pray-

ing, in effect, God at least let me get it off here in my head! And it is out os such denial in the place of biological spore that most of what we recognize as wit or cleverness, "literature," in contrast to poetry, comes. The "academic," the "formula poem," that which feeds off other artists' genuine experience, all that sad rippling extension of the genuine stone plunked into the pool -- but not the stone's own ripples -- no, more as if occasionally a stone were to be plunked in and go straight about its business to the bottom, and these ripples were waiting over there in the pond grass and came out gently sucking at the stone's centrific power.

*

I believe man and woman kind are coming into a time of extraordinary fulfillment and push into the human future. I believe that we can now understand, perhaps for the first time, although the individual soul has dreamed this understanding throughout the ages, perhaps for the first time to understand Whitman's distinction between amatory and cohesive love. Whitman does not say much about the distinction; his emphasis is on the latter in such a way that some of its meaning lies in man to man love, in what has been to this time called "homosexual" in contrast to "heterosexual." The word "amatory" has the ring of the western love-tradition, of amour etc., that we associate with men and women. The word "cohesive," on the other hand, seems to mean more, evokes for me a much wider range of possibility, having built within it "cohere," a word dear to the creative process.

I came to this distinction of Whitman's reading an interview with Allen Ginsberg in Gay Sunshine newspaper and I see in Ginsberg's new book, The Fall of America, that he has repeated this Whitman statement (a footnote from Democratic Vistas) under his dedication of his book to Whitman. What struck me the hardest about the quote is that 50 years ago it would have been read within the shell of a tradition that today seems to have cracked, and thus the words ring of a profound insight into our present state:

> "It is to the development, identification and general prevalence of that fervid comradeship (the adhesive love, at least rivaling the amative love hitherto possessing imaginative literature, if not going beyond it) that I look for the counter-balance and offset of our materialistic and vulgar American democracy and for the spiritualization thereof. Many will say it is a dream and will not follow my inferences: but I confidentially expect a time when there will be seen running through it like a half-hid warp through all the myriad audible and visible worldly interests of America, threads of manly friendship, fond and loving, pure and sweet, strong and life-long, carried to degrees hitherto unknown, not only giving tone to individual character and making it unprecedentedly emotional, muscular, heroic and refined, but having the deepest relation to general politics. I say democracy infers such loving comradeship as its most inevitable twin or counterpart, without which it will be incomplete, in vain and incapable of perpetuating itself."

Ginsberg then quotes from another footnote, to the preface of the 1876 edition of Leaves of Grass, in which the word "adhesive" again occurs, this time with human implications:

> "-- this universal democratic companionship, this old eternal yet ever-new exchange of adhesiveness, so fitly emblematic of America -- "

"Amatory" love is a state of love in which not only are man and woman at war but so are man and man, and woman and woman. "Adhesive" love implies a sense of the human in which love in its variations and forms becomes the adhesive force of all relation.

Of course what "adhesive" is, exactly is, is deadly difficult to define -- quite possibly none of our present ideas as to what love is are capable of grasping it -- the main thing I keep in mind while thinking about it is that it is human and

not sexual. One approximation might be Blake's "The human is four-fold, the sexual three-fold," which is Blake's distinction between the third level of archetypal consciousness, Beulah, or erotic love, and the fourth (and in Blake's work, the highest) level, which is Eden, or creative love. The problem with all causes is that as such, as cause, they imply an effect which is bound up with the cause itself i.e., equal rights, or a share of the existent power structure. One feels sexually imprisoned, say, and locks into a cause to seek sexual freedom. Yet sexual freedom does not end with even erotic fulfillment, and those who set their water-mark at "sexual freedom" inevitably end up defending it as an end, and thus pruning their vines short of their own potential for growth.

Yet if what is "adhesive" does not stop at what is "sexual" it most certainly includes it, takes sexual fulfillment as base, or compost. For it seems to me that the great great error of what we understand as history has been to uphold the spirit at the expense of sexual fulfillment, to drive a wedge between the erotic and the human, to say in effect that if you take your truth from one you are therefore at odds with the other. Spirit should be an increase or rebirth out of sexual gratification, not an alternative to it.

We see Van Gogh, for example, on the burning dusty road outside Arles at summer noon, trudging along with his easel and paints, his feet seem to melt into the road itself, they seem to become a glue he is pulling himself out of, against, in order to move at all, for Van Gogh was, as many others have been, burdened with the "adhesive" -- his desire was to fulfill his spirit, and thus the spirits of others, through his art -- he brought a terrible power to his art, which is essentially the reason it exists with such force in the human psyche today, terrible in that, like César Vallejo, he needed to paint (or in Vallejo's case, to write) in order to be human -- thus his leap, or more aptly his explosion, was directly from what he was given, his mortal birth, directly into creative love without the intervention of erotic fulfillment. Van Gogh burns like a roman-candle; it is one fast explosion of fire and sparks, 10 years, over 700 paintings, over 1500

drawings, one smoking surge without the intervention of other -- and bam he is over like that! I am not making any kind of ultimate judgement on the value of Van Gogh's art when I put my feelings about his life this way -- I am attempting to see him as heroic, for one reason, because he was operating in a tradition of "amatory" love in which the heart of love has walls of steel --

for Van Gogh is part of a heroic tradition that is now just beginning to emerge as a form, a tradition that might be sighted as: art as redemption based on the antithesis of sexual versus spiritual fulfillment,

and the evil of this tradition is that the division is repeated at every juncture of human relation. The Van Goghs of the world escape suddenly from the trap and die as outsiders overnight -- why? Because the trap is like the Queen and they the bee -- they got out, but their genitals were torn off, left inside her, and with a gaping hole under one's gut, with a tortured burning hole of deadness in the biological place of the Song of Songs a man or a woman can exist just so long, and at what expense, at what pain!

So the horror of the "amatory" is that out of its own genital deadness it sets up, most often via religion, an infinite string of "ones" in each variety of life, on the putrid assumption that a person is one self, is not a congeries of selves, each trying within one person like bees locked in a bottle to escape into what the bees vaguely see as sunlight, air and the garden --

i.e., creation to be named God

which is the chief spike driven all the way through the human spirit, nailing it in the idea that men are closer to blessedness than women, and not only that, but all life other than the human has no blessedness in it at all,

and there you have the hierarchy, that the closer creatures are to not even people but man! the closer they are to deserving consideration and life. However, if one thinks about this madness for just a moment, one can construct an arguement in the opposite direction that allows just as much if not more mystery into the idea of the world:

> "The A-shi-wi, or Zunis, suppose the sun, moon, and stars, the sky, earth, and sea, in all their phenomena and elements; and all inanimate objects, as well as plants, animals, and men, to belong to one great system of all-conscious and inter-related life, in which the degrees of relationship seem to be determined largely, if not wholly, by the degrees of resemblance. In this system of life the starting point is man, the most finished, yet the lowest organism; at least, the lowest because most dependent and least mysterious. In just so far as an organism, actual or imaginary, resembles his, is it believed to be related to him and correspondingly mortal; in just so far as it is mysterious, is it considered removed from him, further advanced, powerful, and immortal."

The point is, that I stand in such a depth of ignorance, that to say a man is closer to Creation than a slug makes no more sense than to say a slug is closer to Creation than a man. The beauty of this Zuni thought is that it allows a flow both ways which in the way I would like to take it would suggest an interdependent circuit of being, the changing and the timeless both "holy" in that they are alive,

yet this reading of primitive "adhesiveness" only seems to go so far. I mean, I may want to consider the slug, and not rip it off, but what do I do when the tiger includes me as part of its eating?

I may adore the emblematic beauty of the tiger, as say DH Lawrence did and may fight that sense of life that wishes for the tiger to lay down with the lamb, but I must build a protection from the tiger if I live in the bush, must separate myself from it and thus from its power, as well as the power of the mosquito, the power of the sun, the power of the rain, as well as the power of the dry earth, and thus through a series of separations that may take only five or six generations I have a very thorough inside and outside set up and am beginning to dream the spirit of creation to be "human" like myself.

This is an eternal reoccurence; it is happening with great imagination on the left hand panel of Bosch' s Garden, where a rather spooked robed priest takes a naked woman' s hand, the two of them watched by a naked man sitting by them on the ground; he watches them with a kind of bland interest, making no move to interfere. In my imagination I see that a few moments, or centuries before, he was standing in this glade holding the woman where the priest is standing now; as if he fell back, and his place was taken by the robed man. In this sense, the priest is a tendency in humankind manifest in the Christ or patriarchy; the Adam and Eve of equal exchange replaced by self-conscious Eve and robed priest --

yet in this very moment first creatures are crawling out of a dark pool, the water black yet the walls sunlit and salmon-colored, winged fish, 3 headed serpent birds, a cat with a mouse by the ear, a hooded kind of duck-fish reading a tiny book afloat in the pool,

Christ has appeared / the end is in sight

yet it is also the moment of the emergence,

Where I grew up, Indianapolis Indiana, teenage sport was to drive downtown after dates on Friday night, pick up "queers," take them out to the country, and as soon as they' d suck the guys off, beat the shit out of them, take their money /

At that point the human psyche cries out,

another creature crawls out of the throbbing eye in the vise,

I am stunned that within my own age I could be witness to what the McCahill brothers did to other people in Indianapolis 1952

and see the rebound, the sudden pressing forth of that aspect of the human, the homosexual, demanding to take its place in the mystical alphabet of human being,

but is there ever an end to this expansion/contraction?

Because, as Wilhelm Reich pointed out, there is a biological principal at work in the stormcloud as well as the amoeba as well as a person which can be identified as peristaltic, and which achieves its acme of excitation in the human

being at the moment of orgasm,

Are we to be governed by this principal on all levels of interaction, that is, is this the first and ultimate image of the experience of the universe?

It is crushing to feel a slow slow clarification taking place yet to also feel that the clarification has always taken place, and that what one feels as "new" or "now possible" is at root the inexhaustible yearning of the imagination for a liberation it knows nothing of, but which seems as I sit here at this moment to travel forever in a dream-time, in which all that is imagined could be visited --

for the green glade and the obscure figures moving as I lay by your side this morning, breathing in the sweetness of your breast, are not in my deepest hopes "metaphors for poetry,"

but sightings of where I would like to go with my entire body and soul where everything that had ever lived would be living,

yes, where there would be no gravity or opaqueness or ministers of separation, the shaman-dream, to visit the "land of the ever-living,"

that harpsicord of yearning upon which Carlos Castaneda plays, in himself as well as in us, that he met a man who actually had made a hole in the material universe,

yet my friend Robert Kelly says it does not matter whether Don Juan is real or not, whether someone named Juan Mattus exists or whether Carlos imagined him, and at the time Kelly said that something powerful in my mind protested, No I said, if Mattus does not exist then those books are just more of what we have always had,

imagination compensating for our essential impotence and ignorance confronted with existence,

This afternoon I see Kelly and I are both right; to break the wall down is to imagine nothing, the fact that the wall is before me forces me into my mind to imagine what is beyond the wall -- yet to stop there is to live in my mind, for there is another force in me that wants to tear down this wall to enable another friend, Paul Blackburn, who I watched die two

years ago, to escape from the trap in which we are all buried --

What kind of maniac would I be if I said Paul is as present in his books as he was when he was alive with his books?

And yet, and yet, the treadle of the "cohesive" at work, that slow slow sense of increasing clarification which moved me to think early this morning,

when I opened the Bosch I expected to see him way ahead of us, at least in the center panel of The Garden --

I came to The Garden lured by the possibility that the human species is approaching the moment in which the action, the intermingling, actual intermingling of the kingdoms, will occur --

where men and women will make love to fish and berries,

where songbirds will feed human babies,

where a collie fucking a young woman will be a pleasant scene,

where a boar tearing a man apart will be an ecstacy not penalized by putting a fence around the boar,

and then I looked at the Bosch; I was amazed by how much I had imagined -- in his great intermingling center panel

there is not even any fucking,

most of the people look vaguely bored,

no erect penises, no passionate eyes,

and the whole business of sensual dalliance leading to the hell of the right hand panel was again upon me,

the slow rot of sensual dalliance, the staying in bed, the setting of an upper limit in Beulah, the garden of love, with the consequent plunge into the Ulro, sterile fusion of self of night and fire and machinery, demons of unfulfilled desire climbing up ladders out of the body gone to rot in it own wetness --

*

Less hot than ever before I
sank into the tub water

my penis & balls a little
out of the warm water,
afloat, attached
    -- adhesive --
Caryl in another room,
    -- dear --
I watched the infinite time of
the moment
    my balls penis
      an octopus -- or
little island of skin & bells
                    afloat --
    adhesive & dear
integument to person,
      no longer man or woman,
    afloat under sun
        in water

& the Genesis, the scum becoming,
    the wrinkled bag, the
little hunched fungus that
    cld erect & thus
lead a person to a person
    took joy in being both a man
& a person, perceptually in touch
with the greater time of
    the octopus blister in the
warm cloacal waters,
    "I" seems to live
person truly lives
    "I" seems to die
a person receives me, & me,
    & who &
Caryl in another room
splitter-of-self --

/March 19, 1973,
Sherman Oaks/

the lovely Forethinker.

Robert Kelly:

Section 23 of THE LOOM

Wood
of change
to range
me through,
my will
is till
& never
from,
my form
may discipline
the song
of changes,
age
of silicon
age of carbon
hardening
in the dens
of my successive
wills.
Inorganic tree:
who would
forgive me
if I climb
& time
be wrong?
Remoteness,
long
agreements

with purpose
turned
to renew.
Now
at last
to visit you
to secure
your purity
to lure
my form
to this
engagement.
Elements
scattered,
the wizards
long ago
lost ac-
curate count.
How many?
(A voice
in fog,
soft, alto,
subdued
beneath the
bitter
arches,
asking of me
How many?)
I can know
only
what pierces me.
How many?
Feet
& hands
& eyes &
broken nose,
ears
& fingertips

& slipped
over the
whole
world my
skin,
rock mantle,
sphere
of hidden grass
& public flower,
my sex
concealed
by bushes,
the maidens
rush
up from the sea
not understanding
ocean
is no tomb
& no tomb
is solid,
not even
this hour
holds.
(She asks
again,
the elks
of Caledon
vanish
into fens,
the towers
raise
only in me,
she asks
again, How
many?
my answer
would crack
us both

wide open,
O lady
don' t you know,
cant you
feel
even in this
dark
the limit
imposed
by the nature
of the thing?
No sense
to ask
How many?)
This balance
is a balk,
a ladder
firm
but nowhere
at the top,
of all
evasions
none worse
than this way to
vanish in air,
a cross
purpose,
a memory
boiled
out of an old
confusion,
pure,
limits of the
world,
not what I reach
but reaches
me.
I rise

to remember,
we both
can know
anything
only
when we two
are pierced
in each other,
stuck,
turned
inside out
then I look out
from your
eyes
& what I see
was never me
before,
wet meadow
a broken arch,
the aqueduct
gushing still
its gravity
fall
to waste
the water
where it can
never
be used,
this mineral.
What can I do?
(She asks,
How many?)
what can I
do if suddenly
there is no one
out there
& no one looking
but the air?

I thought
it would be
One
when I had
subjected
my erect
city
to your vast
geography
or built me
there
where you were
most various --
with reason
I thought something
would come of that.
Naked,
gladly,
I climbed
& naked
you were climbed --
your form
knew mine
& the numerous
I thought
singled
us there
where we
mutually
rose.
Others
you saved--
now save
yourselves
they cried,
but she
naked
as I knew her

& with her
friends
naked
at her side
whispered up,
How many?
How many
are the elements,
we never asked,
too shy for that,
& now up high
you've forgotten.
They were
weeping
but I had not
forgotten.
You & I
bled
into each
other,
the numbers
were perishing
under us,
it was hard
& hard to
speak.
I watched
their nakedness,
was moved
to love them
clearly.
What I had
I used to
speak,
I told them
Three
must be Four
when the woman

comes to mind
& Four
must be Five
a little,
just
this broken
hour
& for such
as me,
I' m Five
enough
for all of you
& when I pass
the Three
go into
Four
& the Four
be One
& the One
remember me.
After that
it will be quiet
& the One
will dance
with what
I can not explain --
it will not
be Two & not
be None
but One
will not dance
alone.
Then I let
my head hang
down
& watched the
numbers
crumble

& the ground
crack open
& I heard
their bare feet
slap on the rock
like the feet
of people
dancing
& I knew
that whatever
you & I
had discovered
in each other
they also
in some
kind of sense
knew too.
We rested there
a little bit
lifted up
above the hill
until the both
of us
were only carbon
& even that
much of form
defined a song,
one
that others
have leave to
sing
since you & I
are done.

*

Kenneth Irby:

FOR THE SNOW QUEEN

The kindred soul of my dead friend David Sandberg
came to me while I was washing dishes
came as the audience I saw myself with
listening to Debussy' s antique Grecian epigraphs

that we lack for our manness
the admission of all our female
that my brother and I are
not at our mother
she is in us

*

who are the women of Fort Scott
as I read out the call of the Whore of Babylon
to Dee and Kelley
among them my mother coming down National Avenue
floating toward me

who is the Female Saviour of the Plains
in every town?

-- 19 Feb 72

the women in the air, of the Kansas median

the boundary strip with Missouri, the Southern matriarchy
petticoat rip, pre-war silk

not the Pioneer Mother statue
floating through Council Grove

that the Mid-West answer, Ed
said, to the feminine
principle, is to strangle it

but the pioneers into whatever my parents thought
culture meant North out of
Texas not so much the East

into Kansas, as ambition's respectability home

-- 7 Mar 72

no Sapphos
but women who taught

*

that she had an academy
eminently respectable and married herself
taught young girl pupils "who
devouted themselves to the cult of the goddess"
was a 19th century German invention
Wilamowitz
giving Prussian state vatic status
to the ache and letch

*

anywhere inside the radius of a roadhouse tenor honk
just come into off the front porch aura

*

she celebrated Aphrodite

κυθέρηα
κύπρις
κυπρογένηα
'Αφροδίτα

and sang in fragment 140 (a), the cult song
Adonis -- Ishtar -- Thammuz

Beat your breasts, girls,
Tear your dresses.

-- 19 Mar 72

the migration route blues
from deep sand track roadhouses

*

in the late 40s Dean (Dene) Benedetti
alto man from LA (another source says Susanville)
followed Bird around all over the country
from gig to gig by Greyhound bus
wire-recorded everything he played
Benedetti died the wires were never found (probably not so)

the general Great Plains memory

*

the lost record groove paces

Philip Lamantia following too

the Vanamee limp through Mexico

around the neck the telepathic pendant

the petrified glacier gem

*

her childhood for him was like the last inhabited edge of the ice age, 's feminine survivor -- that meant she was always on the go -- across the always just unknown country figurations of imperial benevolence -- or as Kali, the imperial police

*

her childhood was his late ice age, that distant, where she had gone, the places she had been, growing up -- he would ask her, who' d you save then? and she would say, you -- the flowerbed mud caked on her drawers, carried so many different places -- everywhere, he thought, he could ever see her

so there is Ceres the older woman who has lost her own Persephone youth, who searches and searches, as all living things wither -- and she finds . . .

just as we are found now, by that ice age

*

You are of course never yourself.

-- Everybody' s Autobiography

I think now the Zorro figure who disappeared into the tree under my bedroom windows at night didn't come with a woman but sought one -- the most intense kind of companion but without children -- on the patrol, like childless couples of my parents' age, the Thin Man and Nora' s of my childhood -- he was a mountain man stalker of that Northern Forest I knew had grown where our house was -- "Captain Woman" Ab Woods called her, and he wanted to be her, when we were 10 or 11 -- the first sighter of his own female self I ever knew

-- I keep catching evidences of her, like Jim Beckwourth' s wife or the pencilled names of brides on the bricks of the shelter house in Gunn Park, lovers of the 30s and 40s, the verge of WWII and my highschool years the Korean, the she in all of those, the she come out of the weather

the one I am I am not, the identity of me in mine of her -- come out of the gate of that tree with her husband, just exactly that relationship -- and she says:

> I am the daughter of Fortitude, and ravished every hour, from my youth. For behold, I am Understanding, and Science dwelleth in me; and the heavens oppress me, they covet and desire me with infinite appetite: few or none that are earthly have embraced me, for I am shadowed with the Circle of the Stone, and covered with the morning Clouds. My feet are swifter than the winds, and my hands are sweeter than the morning dew. My garments are from the beginning, and my dwelling place is in my self. The Lion knoweth not where I walk, neither do the beasts of the field understand me. I am defloured and yet a virgin: I sanctifie, and am not sanctified. Happy is he that embraceth me: for in the night season I am sweet, and in the day full of pleasure. My company is a harmony of many Cymbals, and my lips sweeter than health itself. I am a harlot for such as ravish me, and a virgin with such as know me not.... Purge your streets, O ye sons of men, and wash your houses clean; make your selves holy, and put on righteousness. Cast out your old strumpets, and burn their clothes... and then I will come and dwell amongst you: and behold, I will bring forth children unto you, and they shall be the Sons of Comfort....

there is a flower bed where I grew up that is the exact boundary of that attachment

-- Mar 72

"Homage to Albert Pike"

She sits at the edge of the porch
the old Whore of Babylon
Grandma Hot Momma on a bed of slops

and in the distant fields of the recollection
a backyard smoke rises

so with the soul to heaven
of another unknown Mason

feminine hierarchies like great angels
hang before the portals of the Temple of the Scottish Rite
their bright eyes knives into the curtainings

as we the children from the windows of the billiard room
look on, longing

so they come to carry us into the mystery chambers
so come to light with ordinary
day glancings
the dark cuntless dark
full of hootings

where only men, only the tall candles
face the dark alone
as we too face wanting the men's solitude

She who sits at the edge of the porch
comes with thunder, comes with the Eastern Star
into the West, carrying us

where the Masons makeris
stand on the pavement with their shaktis
angel-armored out of the sky

-- 10 Apr-16 Aug 72

" The Lady of Shalott -- Homage to Tennyson"

The moon freezes, the trees
are flesh to the eyes
. . . she stands before her mirror
which mirrors a world behind her
  she is not in
                and she weaves from what she sees there
a copper-beech tapestry that is a well
where strands flow up from the spring beneath the world
                                and disappear
and leaves that are tongues into the air
  speak, sing, and then
                unmake their spell

weaving without memory, seeing without feeling
only aware of the bright spot approaching
                and then remote
              taking color and then white

  and of its tracery
  what will come

. . . they may approach by river
  they may approach by road

  there is a slow undressing of the landscape as they come
  and a slow enclothing as they go

  in the center of the mirror is the brightest hour of all
  where naked picnickers settled in the splendor of the
                empire
  build nations up and let them fall . . .

*

The mocking bird sang all night long
in the interstices of his song

she came again --

from the tower beyond her shoulder
across a world of older slow repose
across the stream beyond the alcove' s window

the Copper-Beech Tree Maiden
in the moonlight like the ache of highschool graduation night unsatisfied

and the Hawk Flight Boy stand
in the summer thunder introspection

Harvest Wheat Snow Queen
Eastern Gold Tobacco King

enamel overlays
across the dark and moonlight checkered floor

"I am half sick of shadows," said The Lady of Shalott
and as she turned, the tapestry
was burned away
the mirror fell -- "their world
back into the well," she sighed
and turned to make the sky again
for day

-- 28-29 May-16 Aug 72, 2 Apr 73
Somerville-Berkeley-Annandale

Michael Heller: (from THE INTERMINGLING

THE BOW' S WEIGHT

" If we are correct in stating that every organismic movement has an understandable expression, this does not seem to apply in the case of the orgiastic convulsion."
--Wilhelm Reich

The bow' s weight
behind its arrow

Feathered serpent
which enters the sacred place

and comes with all
I feel and know

An end point, in-
articulate,
which gathers sensate world
and speech,
blots them in fiery process, why this
is the timely death

But that instant
I cannot compose here

Admit it only
in the figure of a speech

Before return and reclamation

of the self

In which state, again find myself
heavy
with my self...

*

When I saw the man fuck her in the film,
when it began,
how hard I got

And felt the inward turn
of attention divided

The desire of the woman
The desire of the man

Which played and mingled across
the racked bodies grinding in the light

Moving toward that instant
when even they
could not face
and be the film' s purpose

There, utter cold
touched me
with what was seen

I dangled, pudding
between my legs
bereft and sexless

-- their betrayal
of that human moment

. . . . .

Because a man cries out in pain
' Art also is not good for us'

To locate a man in pain?
To say we know what that means?

But we say nothing
to help the man in pain

An image of a grimace
An image of someone weeping

Reading the book, seeing the film
-- to be wounded and looking for use

Let us be clear on these limits:

The disease of the artist
is the showing of wholeness
when the wholeness may be banal

The disease of the artist
is that he is called as witness
and spills it all

Art as life?

The bull, maddened in the ring
unaware he is an artform,
most alive in that moment

Jodorosky' s rabbits and chickens
Barack' s rats?

The spit and blood of the drool
on those who make art life

Come and see it

See the film
which runs the length of your days
proving all in the ad and more

The media to which
life and death
have been invited to divert us

I too want to be,
I don't blame that

I too give myself to those pictures

Dreaming the bull's dream
done to death by picks
-- never so alive in that moment

But the artist doesn't love you
He loves the images which you see

You are the glass bead on the screen
getting now the light, now the dark

Even now justifying your position
some distance from the focus

*

George Quasha:

SOMAPOETICS 13: the somatachism

First Chapter: For My Marriage

1. Who is in front of you, during somatachism period?
A. The Body. The other one. The twining unto juice. What there is, or is there, to go on, or in.
2. For what purpose does he come into the classroom?
A. To get the word! Greek for body is akin to L. tumere to swell -- more at THUMB; on the other hand, an East Indian leafless vine (Sarcostemma acidum) of the family Asclepiadaceae, yielding milky juice; and especially a metanoiac mushroom (Amanita muscaria, Ger Fliegenpilz, Russ mukhomor, Fre tue-mouche or crapaudin) -- Vedic, in the Wassonian Speculation, and much hymned -- from su to press, akin to Av haoma, Gk hyei it is raining -- more at SUCK.
3. Whom or what does he or she call itself and why?
A. Person /a, al/ or what is done alone, like thumb-sucking, or depending on the mood to be explicated, Una figura della donna miae, as Guido says, or Ewig-weibliche, as Goethe -- or Krepid?
4. Hamlet? Did you say Hamlet? Who's Hamlet?
A. Amlaghe, the dog who sniffs the trail of Aster Phaantatos, also Asaleny, the Little Ass, Wirling the Dwarf, and MOST telling: Waril-eghid the Wall-eyed!
5. Why in God's name so MANY, or better yet, why TWO eyes?
A. One for each direction -- or any number greater than AN only -- and their crossways, or causeways:
   (a) The polar cracks in the walls, Left and Right of us;
   (b) The bridge of the nose, what wobbles and glows.
6. What do you think when, crossing, you chance to look

Heavenward?

A. What new Lull in Art is
needed to Read who or what now Signs
my rotting name for Star Gazers, those
bottom-dwelling fish having
open eyes on top of the head?

7. Speaking of food and sea, is the raw Oyster Mushroom
-- that purple seashell lodged in detritus --
smarter than the cooked?

A. No, you ninny! It's 769 tastebuds behind Oyster-style
Pleurotus ostreatus, the natural superiority of
all that is Woman-made by Silver Moonlight; i.e.,
breaded and fried in olive oil and butter --
Lo! Aphrodisia rides Her scallop past us!

8. What is the most painful but fertile visual moment to
remember?

A. Isis
Conjuring the Crab-devoured cock of
Osiris
Under the distant Nile!

9. Woe! ah why so far fallen, whence the knife that
slices the corpus 14 times, and the brain thrice?

A. Man, this is the DESERT, just look at that SUN!
Or what do you expect out here on Plate 8 America a
Prophecy "That stony law I stamp to dust: and scatter
religion abroad / To the four winds as a torn book," or
as Gerrit of Gloucester says "Alchemists & cooks have
the same problems, how to manage the heat." And pot-
ters. Amidst the lustful fires, the Conductor waves his
Rod and we Choristers, astray and sucking up to the
audience -- if it is permissible to speak in this fashion,
and para- contextualize Plotinus, shifting the noia
as gear, urging our Somamobile Eastward to Ta'wil, the
Exegesis that leads the limbs back
to Her slipknot.

10. Say, I don't get it, who are you anyway, I mean
can a poem BE, without a REAL tone of voice, or can
there be a poet if you can't find him here?

A. "Being is licit. Hold tight to that."
-- if I may personate, two-lipped,
him who gave us his own angelic 11th letter
to use on a Voice
or gave it to the Voice
to use on us.

By the way, Tap the Tree
won by 4 1/2 lengths in the 7th at Aquaduct, yesterday,
13th Nov. 1972, paid $7.40 and $3.40, before a crowd
of 17,844. Jockey: Angel Cordero.

11. Thanks, but I' m no gambler. What I want to know is
can a man bathe in the warm wine of Sehnsucht / the
hankering to Return? and retain his Manhood and/or
social usefulness?

A. Listen, this is what I heard in an old oak stump
in exchange for tapping a highschool cadence in 3/4 time:
Between heart-throb and brain-lobe, a hyperspace
lies in waiting. Lose your shadow, and slip it in.
Thus I came to know that I am my own sore-spot,
I have found it, and it is not out on the porch.
Healing is choice.

12. Is that the same as to initiate?

A. No. "To initiate is intransitive." But it follows.

13. Then what is reflected in Arnolfini' s convex mirror?

A. The Righted hand-clasp of Bride and Groom.
The left-hand curved late-morning window-light.
Fruit: 3 oranges (?) on table, 1 apple (?) on sill = 4.
The Artist wearing the much-sought Blue.
Beside him, the still unidentified "Friend-in-Red."
Unseen, on mirror-wall, but presumably reversed:
Johannes de eyck fuit hic 1434
Likewise the wooden daimon who watches over hands.

14. What about the 6-branched candlestick
with one candle, lit in broad daylight?

A. The turning hexagrams of bivalvic light.
First: 9 in the 2nd place, No. 7: Shih / The Army:

Water in the Earth: The Power in hiding.
Binding until all corporeal warfare ends.
Mars centers in the Man who CAN center the martial.
Second, thru the Looking Glass: 9 in 5th, No. 8: Pi/
Union:
Waters over Earth mingle where they can.
Know your true collegium, and hold
It all together.
Seek the oracles where they are, in and on time.
The kingly hunt is 3-sided, and all that crosses in front
Is fourth and free.
And in the end, where re- and unre-flected
alike reverse, She,
K' un, Second and Other,
receives us who can open
Out

*

Robert Bertholf:

AN ELEGANT INCONCLUSION

Dear Clayton,

Well, here it is, the final number of Caterpillar, and the end of an adventure in poetry that comes, almost inevitably, to an end. For the shock of it is that Caterpillar has accomplished very little, in the public world of poetry. True enough, the magazine can be seen as an extension of Origin and the Black Mountain Review, in the sense that it provided a place for the writers of that generation to publish. For those who keep track of such matters, it has been interesting to keep in touch with what they are doing now, and to pick up on some new voices that have come into the scene. The authenticity of the poetry is not the question; the question is the effect that these voices have had on the public audience of poetry. The real voices of the poet have such a small nitch in the whole poetry scene that it is a wonder now that the magazine comes up to number twenty with energy to spare. That it has made it is certainly a tribute to your efforts, and a greater tribute to your contributors who maintained high concern for that context of authenticity. Scattered, the importance of Caterpillar will remain scattered for the public world of poetry, in the same way that the importance of Margaret Anderson's Little Review remained scattered, until the private world of poets forces itself to public recognition. For the elegant inconclusion has not been determined by the magazine as much as it has by the great arbitrator of taste, the American university, and mainly the University of Iowa (and other institutions where the writer's workshop has proliferated). In a strong sense, Iowa and its children make the reading public of these times. They deny Caterpillar.

But it is not simply that Paul Engle began a dynasty of control over reading taste and writing form that was carried on by George Starbuck and now by Marvin Bell, it is that there existed and exists in the American universities an atmosphere of sympathetic indulgence for his kind of poetic product. The atmosphere, moreover, has its origin deep in the poetry of this century, and comes finally from T.S. Eliot's criticism, with the intelligent conversation of T. E. Hulme in the background. That was a big leap, from Paul Engle to T.S. Eliot, but in that leap rests the reasons for Caterpillar's inconclusion, and I want to spend a little time getting that from the back to the front of the stage. The proposition: universities and poetry workshops control the power of contemporary poetry, and that power system began with Eliot's criticism.

For the attractive principles which made Eliot's brand of criticism began in THE SACRED WOOD (1920). First off, he sets out his notions of "The Perfect Critic" and then moves on to "Tradition and the Individual Talent," where he concocts the doctrines of the flowing tradition which alters with each addition, and makes the famous pronouncement: "The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extension of personality." Personal emotions bothered Eliot, and it is in the extensions of emotion that he found fault with Hamlet: Hamlet, he wrote, "is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in excess of the facts as they appear." The man and the play lack "objective correlatives" for particular emotions. While Shakespeare does get huge praise in other essays, William Blake, Eliot maintains, lacks a sense of form and tradition, and gets too involved in his own ideas. While Swinburne's "sharp visual image" comes across as a positive feature in his poetry, the verse still lacks a beauty of music and a beauty of content (Milton, in 1936, is set down because he lacked visual imagery, and wrote blank verse as if it were a dead language). The poetic line, we are assured in the closing essays, has been maintained from Euripides to Marlowe, while Ben Jonson's "logic of emotions" and tight sense of unity of design

and characterization hold the form of drama together.

With the addition of the essay "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921) and the "Dante" essay (1929) Eliot's place in the tradition and his main critical targets were established. The doctrine of the "dissociation of sensibilities" and the "sensuous apprehension of thought," in Chapman, for example, only expanded his earlier notions of the necessity of joining thought and feeling in objective images, while Dante's unifying philosophy and poetry in "clear visual images" provided a safe base for his poetry. The ideas of a fractured poetry -- a break in language between thought and feeling -- getting mended by the establishment of an anti-democratic Christian society came along a bit later. Really, though, by 1921 the house was built. Poetry should be made out of tight unified systems, expressing objectified, and contained, emotions. He redefined literary history so as to exclude the Romantic period, and found his base, as Joyce did, in Dante, where Doctrine ringed or outlined the area of the generative and visionary imagination. By themselves, these essays couldn't bother Caterpillar, but their application by other writers could.

Allen Tate comes in here, for he is the man who starts the line right to Iowa. In the late 1920's Tate wrote a series of reviews in which he picked up many of Eliot's ideas. In review after review he comes back to the doctrine of the dissociation of sensibilities, and the problem of the modern giant in achieving a unified vision in art when he lives in a decaying religious and cultural world. He berates Conrad Aiken's poetry because it runs off into "cosmic implications" to the neglect of particular emotions: "he does not assimilate his vision with an emotion, with subject matter" (The Nation, 13 January 1926). "Objective references" comes up in a discussion of Leonie Adams: "She expresses herself in her best poems in terms of something impersonal and beyond convictions" (The Nation, 3 March 1926), while we are told that Sherwood Anderson's Dark Laughter "contains emotion in excess of the facts" (The Nation, 25 July 1926). In a short article entitled "The Revolt Against Literature" (The

New Republic, 9 February 1927), Tate claims that the modern poet suffers from a malady of disbelief: "his attitudes lack the authority and form which only belief can give them." In a review of Eliot's POEMS 1909-1925, on the other hand, Tate maintains that his master "has attempted with considerable success to bring back the total sensibility" (The New Republic, 30 June 1926). And throughout his collections of essays Tate comes back again and again to Eliot's ideas about the value of tradition in literature, the disturbance caused to poetry by the romantic verse following 1798, and to the notions of the well-made poem, complete with a logic of the imagination, unity and the objective dealing with particular emotions. The closure and the disclosure comes, though, in a 1927 Sewanee Review article: "In the course of this essay the writer has spoken of poetry as a fusion of an intensely felt ordinary experience, an intense moral situation, into an intensely realized art. He is definitely conscious of indebtedness to the tendency of ideas in the METAPHYSICS and POETICS of Aristotle." The mixture comes clear. Eliot and Aristotle mix to get an absolutely closed system in a poem. The poem as absolute object. Eliot's concern, underlying his propositions about poetry, was the felt breakage between form and content. Eliot's ways replaced the release from the unconscious with the accumulation of conscious, religious traditions. This was a curious combination which led to the magnificent cross-purposes of cyclic visionary experience and linear historical traditions in "Four Quartets." The same sanction of the objectified particularity of emotions in a closed poem -- Aristotle's beginning, middle, and end here -- led Tate into the cross-purposes of a Southern Agrarian Movement which was to supply a unified society but which was supported by the paradoxes of aristocracy and equality. The whole design was to mend the crack in the form-content structure by supplying the culture with structural unity. If the culture was unified, the argument ran, then the poem would be unified.

But the transferring of Eliot's doctrines of criticism, identified with his notions of a Christian culture in the essays of the 1930's, into the criticism and civic views of the South-

ern Agrarians is only part of the story. In 1935 The Southern Review began, with Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren in command of policy, and in 1939 Kenyon Review began with John Crowe Ransom guiding editorial decisions. Tate and his friends had emerged from the review columns, and now had three (Sewanee Review as the third) journals to dispense their critical doctrines. They became academically respectible. Williams was no doubt right in claiming that "The Waste Land" put poetry back into the university, but with Tate and his crew publishing article after article in exposition of a view of poetry derived from Eliot's essays, then I could add here that the criticism gave the article writers the means to present Eliot's poetry in such an impeccably written and argued way that the academy had to accept it. The transferred systems of criticism became the basis for taste in reading poetry, as well as the guidelines for writing it.

The clincher came in 1938, with the publication of Brooks and Warren's UNDERSTANDING POETRY. The introductory "Letter to the Teacher" announced:

> The editors of the present book hold that a satisfactory method of teaching poetry should embody the following principles:
>
> 1. Emphasis should be kept on the poem as poem.
> 2. The treatment should be concrete and inductive.
> 3. A poem should always be treated as an organic system of relationships, and the poetic quality should never be understood as inhering in one or more factors taken in isolation.

This might be one of the most important statements in the history of contemporary poetry. Here is the classroom monument to Eliot's criticism, and here is the announcement of the basic principles of John Crowe Ransom's THE NEW

CRITICISM (1941). The big break comes in the casting away of matters of traditions -- literary and cultural and historical -- or, perhaps the final statement that these matters of tradition have been so undermined by the present age that they aren't worth considering. Farfetched that -- the main point is that poetry, or a poem, should be a closed system, having a beginning, middle and end, and containing interrelated and unified thought and image patterns. The introduction to UNDERSTANDING POETRY stresses the difference between scientific thought and poetic statement, a difference much elaborated by I.A. Richards' SCIENCE AND POETRY (1926), and a difference which Tate had taken up in an essay of that period. But most of all, the well-made poem comes in as the one most praised. The "message" of the poem was made secondary to the clever stringing of imagery, wit, irony, rhythm in the total structure of the poem. Poems in and deriving from Donne's metaphysical line come in for the greatest praise -- a cardinal point in Eliot's system -- while poems which touch on the romantic tradition (Shelley's particularly) come in for the greatest scorn. Here again, Eliot, and Tate's, notions of the proper lines of literature establish the criterion of taste.

UNDERSTANDING POETRY was completed, in a real sense by Ransom's THE NEW CRITICISM. The basic principles were formalized -- "Formalism" became a key word in the new doctrines. Behind Ransom's insistence on a rational structure in a poem, a pattern of objective references to give order to emotions, and a facile handling of formal conventions, is his convictions that modern poetry has suffered a breakage from the higher myth of religion and the lower myth of culture and historical unity. This notion of the loss of tradition and the world order goes right back to Eliot's "dissociation of sensibilities" and the notions of textual analysis reinforce Eliot and Tate's views of literary history. Eliot's poetry, as well as any other deriving from the proper sources, was perfectly fitted to the new approach. The elements of irony, ambiguity, tension, unity, image and symbol became the pet topics of thousands of essays which filled the

literary journals in the 1940's and the 1950's. What emerged was the "ontological poem." A good poem was one which followed all the rules, could yield to the passion for explication, and most of all could be considered an objective piece of art. Aristotle and Eliot mixed again, with the new ingredients of formal techniques. The absolutely closed poem!

If UNDERSTANDING POETRY and THE NEW CRITICISM had remained an interesting anthology and a curious critical theory, Caterpillar would have a more important place than it does. But this was not the case. Thousands -- perhaps millions -- of students first misunderstood poetry in the universities thru UNDERSTANDING POETRY. That book, coupled with the critical approach of the new criticism formed the tastes and values of American poetry after WW II. Poetry was really in the universities. Poets were trained there, they taught there and the audiences were indoctrinated there. The establishment of contemporary poetry was born out of the nest of Brooks and Warren, and Ransom. For example, in 1950 Olson's essay "Projective Verse" appeared and released poetry from its bondage, yet in 1950 John Ciardi edited a book called MID-CENTURY AMERICAN POETS, which contained essays and poems by Richard Wilbur, Theodore Roethke, Karl Shapiro, E. L. Mayo, Robert Lowell, RichardEberhart, Elizabeth Bishop, John Ciardi and others. That crew was the establishment, and in most university circles still is the establishment. Ralph J. Mill's book CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY (1962) gives critical comments on Eberhart, Roethke, Shapiro, Lowell, Wilbur, Bishop -- the crew -- and then the new poets, William Everson, Denise Levertov, James Wright and Anne Sexton. In twelve years, Olson's essay had scarcely touched the universities, and five years later M. L. Rosenthal proved the Academy's willing neglect. He gets more daring, but deepens the conspiracy with the book THE NEW POETS. Placing Lowell at the head of his gang, and even admitting Ginsberg, which Mills didn't, he allows shallow comments on Creeley, Duncan, Olson and Levertov, whom he accepts with the greatest reluctance. His notions of "confessional

poetry," by the way, are the most respectable in the Academy. Rosenthal has taken up where Brooks and Warren left off as the arbitrator of public taste in poetry.

In a real sense Rosenthal's placing of Lowell at the head of contemporary poetry ends the line begun by Eliot. Part of Lowell's training, in formalism, came from Ransom at Kenyon; and though his struggles with the Catholic Church and the New England tradition were his own, they were nonetheless close enough to Eliot's for Allen Tate to write an introduction for LAND OF UNLIKENESS (1944). From the beginning, Lowell has taken over the universities -- he is thought the premier poet of America, our Auden, Robert Frost's replacement. And this is possible because the universities have all the residual prejudices of the new criticism at hand to deal with his poetry, and his ideas. Now, actually, he is a poet working with the depleted and dissipated energy of Eliot, and his progeny, mainly Anne Sexton, have been left only the anemic imagination of a dry stream of poetry; but like the novelist James Dickey, Lowell and Sexton are the darlings of the schools.

Getting Lowell and his crew into the picture is important for several reasons. He has fulfilled the prophecy of Ciardi's 1950 volume, yet he is still at the end of a tradition, the last of the poets to claim the blessing of the new critics. Snodgrass has the blessing too, and Jarrell was another candidate, but he deserted the dedicated with positive essays on Whitman -- and that was a heresy! The other point about Lowell's poetry is that it is the last that is suited to new critical explication (some are trying to get Ammon's poetry up front now, but it will not work). The principle: when enough criticism accumulates about a kind of poetry, over a period of years, then that poetry deteriorates. The criticism and the poetry get so sophisticated and refined that the poetry becomes all form and the life cannot inform the poetry. New York art dealers in the 1960's nearly destroyed the avant garde by buying paintings and getting them into museums even before the artist worked out their own positions. The paintings joined the establishment, and the energy for experiment died. In

the same way, Lowell's line of poetry and the criticism of it have lost energy and are dead.

If the energy of the poetry has passed, then how do universities maintain their dominance. Administrative energy has replaced creative energy. And now I come to the central point of these remarks. Creative writing workshops, with Iowa's as the most deadly example, were organized to produce and reproduce a special sort of poetry, and poet. Emphasis was and is placed on the well-made poem, the "ontological poem." Imagery, particular events, irony, ambiguity and symbol all should be contained in a tightly woven and self-contained "unit of language." The procedures of the workshop become the fixed doctrines of the poetry writing, and the product, granting the unique experiences of the poet, is pretty much the same. A standardized product, packaged for immediate consumption and approval by a well-trained audience. It happens, then, that the products from the workshop schools of Iowa, Oregon, New Mexico, Indiana or Goddard -- or any number of others -- are uniform in their statement of technique over message, the same split between form and content raised by Eliot. The energy of the workshop, then, maintains the poetry after the lapsing of the creative energy.

The well trained audience, and how that audience gathered, now comes into the picture. Let's start with the Iowa workshop. Paul Engle is still the power there, and that began as far back as 1932 when his first book of poems WORN EARTH was accepted as an MA thesis and won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Prize. But the 1940's and the 1950's are the most important time. During these years hundreds of writers got either MFA's or PHD's at Iowa -- Donald Justice and Bill Stafford for examples -- and went to other schools to teach. They won the right to the title "poet" from the workshop not from an achieved voice or a pleased audience in the little magazines. They went to other schools to teach writing courses and modern literature courses. In the former the disciplines of Iowa were re-inacted and in the latter the tastes and techniques of the new criticism were prolon-

gated. Some of their students began to write the Iowa-type poem, and some became teachers, of poetry and literature. The influence spreads, being re-fed each year with fresh products from the mother school. From writing teachers to chairmen of departments to deans, the whole university system in the United States is riddled with first second and third hand products of Iowa. It then becomes not just poets from Iowa, but poets who become poets via a degree -- from Indiana, Wayne State, Washington, Michigan, Boston University, and Arizona. It began in the middle west and spread to both coasts with a distribution system as elaborate as that for Iowa's other products, pork and corn.

Now with the trained acceptance of the university workshops and degree programs so pervasive in the universities, two other influences come in which control reading. The first has to do with the book publishing industry, and part of this Richard Kostelanetz (December 13, 1/2, 1971) has spread out for all to see. If the book of poems by a new poet will not sell -- that is, if it will not find an immediate audience in the university classroom -- then there is a good chance that the book will not be published. This condition, of course, is the reason for the small press in America. The universities, with their vast, collective buying power, have a strong influence on the publishing business. The new poetry is forced to stay underground, while the established people, those who fit the course outlines and the programmed mind of the teacher, find the big publishers, and wide distribution. Lowell leads this group, but Wilbur, Eberhart, Roethke, Sexton, Dickey, Berryman and etc., are right in there too. New Directions, as the TIMES told us recently, has countered this to some extent, as do the publishers represented by Book People and City Lights, but the power of making a poet famous still rests with the big publishers. As does the power of the review, the second control on reading public. Again, Richard Kostelanetz has spread this out. The review of your ALTARS in the TIMES was a rare event, and certainly not the norm. The point is clear and does not need much development here: reviewing is controlled by a power com-

plex of the universities and the big publishers.

The distribution system is responsible as much for the publishing and review of books as it is for the choice of who gets into the little magazines. It goes without saying that the public magazines, like The New Yorker, and The Saturday Review, are a closed system. But the smaller magazines, like the once holy Poetry, The Northwest Review, The Iowa Review, Kayak, The Southern Review, Measure and The Dragonfly record about 75% of their contributors who are poets with writing degrees and/or positions in universities. One of the great positions of Caterpillar is that most of the contributors are not connected with universities. But the situation of numerous other magazines is vastly different. The editor is university made, and he accepts poetry that fits the demands made on him in the workshops. There is a tendency in this situation for the poetry to be of one kind, and to propound the technical form of the poem over the perception available in the language. Form and content split again. James Tate, the golden boy of Iowa, is one of those who has a ready market in numerous magazines, but Donald Justice, Kenneth O. Hanson (of the northwest school), Louis Simpson, and many, many, nameless others have ready-made places in magazines because both they and the editors have the same training. I get 20 vita sheets a month from poets who want to read at Kent State, and most of them list the degrees from writing schools and then give pretty much the same list of places of publication. It is astonishing! The network of self-gratification is so immense. It comes back to the point of administrative energy, and now goes over into editorial energy, to save, and give respectability to a kind of poetry that has lost all account of its possibilities as a vital art.

The academic poets and editors control the magazines, and they also control the poetry prizes. With the exceptions of Gwendolyn Brooks (1950), Carl Sandburg (1951), Marianne Moore (1952), Wallace Stevens (1955), William Carlos Williams (1963), George Oppen (1969) and Richard Howard (1970), the Pulitzer Poetry Prize since 1950 has gone to poets educated by or teaching, professionally, in universities. The

same is true of the record of the National Book Award. Frank O' Hara' s award was the first one to a poet outside the universities since 1957, and that was shared with Howard Moss. The list of winners is a list of the establishment: some are, Wilbur, Robert Penn Warren, Roethke, Lowell, Ransom, Stafford, Dickey, Berryman, Bly (for he is an Iowa man) and in 1971, Mona Van Duyn. Amazing. And the Yale Younger Poets Prize has a similar record -- John Ashbery' s award is a big exception, when the others include George Starbuck, for BONE THOUGHTS (the most fitting title for a volume in years), Alan Dugan for POEMS, and James Tate for THE LOST PILOT. The list of other prizes won by university poets goes on and gets a bit boring. A few examples: Henri Coulette (1965), Kenneth O. Hanson (1966) and Marvin Bell (1969) -- Iowa' s present leader -- all won the Lamont Poetry Prize; the Harriet Monroe Poetry Award went to Lowell in 1952, Eberhart in 1955 and John Berryman in 1957. The Blumenthal-Leviton-Blunden Prize for poems in Poetry has the best record with Creeley (1964), Olson (1965) and Zukofsky (1966) as winners. The point of all this should be perfectly clear, and is. The closed poem of the university poets is in such desperate condition that it is absolutely necessary to keep giving poets the big public awards in order to maintain the illusion that the poetry is still alive. The result is that the awards are now meaningless. But for the university corporation to admit that would be the same as admitting that its whole world of poetry is defunct, which it is, but which is too drastic an admittance to come into the open.

The next part of the tale has come around very recently. The advertisement for The American Poetry Review begins:

> Dear Professor,
> The American Poetry Review, published six times a year, is the only continuous text for classes studying poetry in all its forms (original translations, critical essays, reviews, columns, worksheets). Unlike other texts (anthologies, for example), it isn' t a one shot thing, it' s ongoing. You receive your issues in class

-- a new text every two months. It helps you to organize your classes openly, as the class is developing. It is also a perfect supplementary reading text to other texts you may be using.

And a little later:

Ideal for poetry writing classes:

The administrative and editorial energies of the establishment, perhaps realizing that its prime material is now getting a bit rank, are launching on a new effort to assimilate the open poetry announced publicly by Donald Allen's THE NEW AMERICAN POETRY. Denise Levertov and Diane Wakoski appeared in the first issues, and that is a little scary. The saving point is that these two are strong enough poets in their own right to resist the pressures of this attempt to force poetry into academic respectability. They certainly are strong enough. The point remains, though, that when a kind of poetry gets taken out of its private world and forced into a public posture the risk increases that it will lose some of its vitality. The American Poetry Review wants to make a business out of the new poetry, and that is a sham!

I began by saying that Caterpillar has come to an elegant inconclusion, and now I say that it is a damn good thing that it did. The poets of importance -- Duncan, Olson, Dorn, Irby, Kelly, Snyder, Lansing, Ginsberg, Palmer, Blackburn, Dawson and Grossinger to mention a few -- have carried on the poetry revolution of the 1950's with high integrity and a deep concern for the art of their work. After all, it is hard to have more than one revolution in literature in a generation, and the statements of Olson and the San Francisco scene made such a sharp break with the rules that it will take some little time for all the implications to be worked out. When the universities get themselves re-organized, they will realize that Caterpillar has projected the extensions of a major period of American poetry; but as it stands now, they are still worried about whom will get the next, empty prize. Let's hope that

by the time awareness dawns another revolution is well under way. Yes, Clayton, you have come thru, and it is good that you did.

*

Thomas Meyer:

i i i

Climb up, cling to your keel on cold seas.
Harden your heart, its beat slips away.
Rains pelt you. Skip the tears,
you' ve had a girl in your time & a life.

a great lamp flickers
grounded by its wick

in deep oil

cotton draws grease
nets fire' s flame

sun caught in branch flue
air' s draught gathers up

yellow leaves

fish flash & wave glist
mingle on my eyes

lumen
---
ulmus

If this new teaching brings any more certain
knowledge it seems right for us to follow it.

So I left rather than kneel
& look to a face marked with
fear, unlined with mercy,
on whose brow moonlight shows
like the glare in snakes' eyes

or take what those hands have
to offer.

Once things were better,
not that much, but this face
& ones like it will be around
for a long time to come.

on the porch
he turned to me
said

' I thought those
trees on the Dee
had Dutch Elm

then realized
it' s autumn'

disease or season
leaves yellow

drought draws
their color on
quicker

that panoply
holds its own a-
gainst dry winds

a day or so
no time at all
it' s gone

it can' t help
come home to me
how change

maintains
its own

& last night when
Bill brought up the kit
' Not to be too friendly

but Margaret & me
would like you down
to dinner some time'

& how when change
wipes it all out
we cling to

the way it' s been

The best now sail the bee' s ship,
their course laid no more by stars,
they themselves are the lights that
fade, their company the constellation
that drifts apart behind thick clouds.

I can't quite lift
my oak post, my tongue
to the roof of my mouth.

Song sticks back deep in
my brain, clogs my heart.

Men came today, trailed
by a dog, to say our god
wears rocks for breasts,
skirts about his knees
& winds his brow with
a bride's linen scarf,

winks & minces, flirts
with boys, stays home,
rakes coals.

Earth stands on her
head, falls apart
at the seams & they
come saying 'Our lady
seeks a song, sing!'

*

George Bereshinsky:

ORDRE

I am certain there are such things as prisons. What must one do to go there? Peep out of windows late at night. Hum Brahms in the bus terminal. They have released a gang of trees from the prison in our town. They were just taken out one morning, lowered into deep holes of small circumference, and axed. The cries woke me up that morning. I look at the clock. Five. I tried to go back to sleep. But the sky became suddenly dark, almost green, and heavy with clouds. I had to go to the window. In the next room my tall and beautiful sister was playing the viola. It would be a few hours before breakfast. The light from the window was dim and I did not light any candles, put on any lamps. I sat down. A few large drops of rain fell on my window with a dull sound. I thought, perhaps somewhere someone was just then eating a fresh and moist cheese cake, the kind I love, with a great, red cherry on it. The strip of light under my sister's door grew faint for a moment. She must have crossed the room, crossing in front of the lamp on her bureau. She is going to bathe. I touch my head. Perhaps today I need to wash my hair. Or just brush it. I think that I have left a fine satin shirt in my sister's room. A streak of blue lightning makes a vivid silver mark across the sky. In the fields the wind is a sea wind.

Her clothes are on the bed and on the floor. They lie as if they had fallen off her. The brown skinned viola may have slid them off,. making her feel faint. The dark corners of the room make it seem round. I sat down on the bed. I could hear her. She was singing.

They said I might make a good actor, an incredible actor. I said I wanted to be a pianist, to sew Seurat to music, to leave life alone. They sat me down. They showed me the knives. She was there the whole time. She had come in. All the eyes in the room turned to the door. They looked at her. She quickly left, excusing herself. Somewhere nearby she has been the whole time. Twice she was at the window (We were on the first floor, so it was not dangerous). And once I saw her across the street, talking to a woman with red hair. Who was she?

The dog at the lake. Everyone is wondering about the dog at the lake. When everybody in the house is asleep, I quietly leave my room, sneak slowly to the kitchen, take some cold meats in my pockets and slide in my belt the large knife in the drawer by the sink. Then I bless myself facing the picture of the Virgin and leave the house across the fields. The lake is two miles away. But I do not go there first. I go in the direction of the woods. There I undress, make water in the grass, grunt and howl, leap and debase the songs of the night. Then I dress again. It is getting lighter slowly. I find my way through the woods, past the hunter' s cabin, through the yellow tall grass and circle half-way around the lake. Before I get to the rock, I undress again and clean myself in the lake, I wash off the filth of solitude. I would like to linger in the lake, but I leave. It is but a short walk to the rock. I do not hurry. My breath is even. Then I am moving very quickly. Soon I am at the rock. Where is he?

I have waited some time. It is fast getting lighter. But this does not bother me as it might have. I wait a moment longer, surveying the blue lake, the sky, the memory of snow

though it is early fall. A moment, and I leave the way I came. I go round the lake and find a boy washing himself in the sparkling water. His clothes are on the shore. He does not see me. I am walking through the woods, past the hunter's cabin, through the yellow grass. In a clearing, a boy, like the one in the lake, is naked and acting like an animal. His clothes are by a tree. He does not see me and I go on. Soon, after the fields, I am at a house and through the roof of it an immense meat knife has been driven.

The rain stopped. Everyone slowly left the doorways of the large, white buildings and many colored salons of the square. The statue of Mars was glistening dully. Though it was unnecessary a few opened their umbrellas. She was one of those who did, a faded scarlet umbrella, shaped closely like an excited breast. I was leaning against the cathedral when the rain began. A small boy in a sailor cap ran in front of her and surprised her.

"No. He did not take anything."

Are you sure, madam? These men who roam the streets at evening and wait for beautiful women are not trained in the habit of taking nothing. And still, you are trembling. And there is a frost on your lip.

"It is just the bad light."

Perhaps you have met him before, somewhere, anywhere. I know it is hard to remember. Perhaps, perhaps at the performance of The Magic Flute given here recently. Many people have been there, not all of them sincere, in that dimly lit enormous building. Perhaps it was one of the actors, one of the singers, you know they are completely mad when they are up there. At the performance I went to, one leapt off

the stage half-way through his song and speared himself on a sharp violincello, just as in a Bosch cartoon. They are all like that.

"No. I did not go there."

All the women clutched at their thighs at that. Of course the body was removed and murder suspected. But the man clearly leapt from the stage. He began pirouetting violently about the footlights and then suddenly leapt at one point. Everyone gasped. It was so extraordinary. The cellist was unconsolable. During the messy removal the orchestra played the prelude to Lohengrin. Toward the end the house became very warm. One woman suddenly went hysterical and, as I led her away, tore her clothes off.

They said I would make a good actor, a great actor. When I walked outside it was snowing, snowing outside. The ancient heroes presented an intriguing tableau, gnawing at a hydrant in a small area of summer. Their torsos resembled a sinewed and beheaded legend related on humid battlefields at dawn. I wondered if I could ever be one of them. I had not the imagination to persist in my inquiry. Besides which it began to snow harder and all the taxis seemed to be carrying musicians. Here one drove past with a bassoon partly out the window. It nearly met with, joust fashion, a bass viol protruding out of another taxi. Everywhere everyone was walking with violins. Businessmen, wives, small boys, little girls, common people. Some had flutes, piccolos, an old woman in a worn red coat had cymbals as large as elephant' s ears in her dark and wrinkled hands. When she died she would make many people cover their ears. There was a prostitute who had green eyes and held a silver triangle from which sparks flew when she touched it. In front of a grey building across the street a banker was standing with a harp. On the corner sat a beggar with a trombone. Through the open doors of a church I could see a priest tuning an

ensemble of timpani. The sheen of his silver hair was beautiful. I stood there and inhaled with cheated breaths the strong music of this harmonified whole, all these stern and vibrant, happy and flowing virtuosi, whose every motions orchestrated my persistent and interminable silences and steps taken uncertainly backwards. What harmony I saw here! Could I linger much more? No. Perhaps. No. To the theatre where they were rehearsing this very minute and perhaps waiting for me.

*

Norman Weinstein:

shattered back/
bone
of the men
who were father grand
fathers
to me
Ezekial' s boneyard backyard shattered
father out the door
impotence
in their lack
of solidness
the women their wives planted
their homes &
laughing at their men
push-overs,
sitting huddled over their soup, taunted
"where' s your BACKbone?"
& he slammed the door the front
entrance is he coming
back
the pain at the base of his spine
an inheritance
(what can I relate
to their sex
lives I imagine
collapsing into bed after
work flat
on his back
after Pearl harbor

" like
a new born babe--helpless"
my back
is all the
definition
of my past
I maintain
its hard curve
curled
to my
touch / carapace
cat-toughness
raised in anger, armor
against the women
who have tested
its presence
Ezekial facing his skeleton a voice saying
your father
is gone
& you' re the man
of the house
" Stand
up
& sensation of being pushed from
behind
her hands on my spine
back break
there were " bad men"
hanging out late in
dim-lit
tap-rooms
in dense cigarette atmosphere
talking
loudly,
obscenely,
spending
recklessly
returning

home
slurred
& vague

some, "like diamonds
in the rough" their women

put up with their
ex

girlfriends & wallets

I suppose those sad sad songs
of the 30s said it all

I was born later

at 6 brought
into the bars, sat

on a stool at the confused
rings of lights
the loud
assertions
the towering
faces too
close
breathing, was told later
raised hell crying
until taken
home the good men sleep in
the good men
embracing wives
emptying
their wallets for clothes bread mortgage
the good women giving their tired flesh to
them /but coveting their

first romances
there is the door reading WOMEN only
I thought of (sadly) finding in an old text the
words
"angels of women's paradise" where
the good men go
after work

*

Michael Palmer:

THE END OF THE ICE AGE AND ITS WITNESSES

Yesterday your fever returned
It was near the middle of July

and we went to see the Red king
Then I took out the net

together with the red bird
and put it down

on the bank of the river. Could the
flat milling stone and a

subsistence on seeds be originally
an American invention? We

cuddled on the seat of the car
until she said desperately

I was never unhappier;
then I told them that we wished to

continue our journey
because we were not reaching our destination

at all. But the creatures of this island
were very kind. The sky

was a deep green, without clouds
since the rain had been falling regularly

onto the lowest branch of a tamarack
where we hung by our knees. Considering

the look of the trees
we were somewhere in Canada

or the Northeast: flat, blue-green needles
o.8 to 1.3 inches long

that yellow in the fall; ovoid cones,
bark thin, scaly and

gray to reddish brown. The soil
is moist and spongy

under the car. E
is white like fog, and A dark,

cycles at some future time
to tell about --

the white tents in the primer
and the kind of flower that trembles easily --

Nothing of the sort is known
or probable on this side of the ocean

nor is there any early record of tents
On a given evening for example

they' re playing cards
at the bottom of a swamp or pond; the Tartar

deserts light up; by the stairways
and armchairs of the rocks a

small world, pale and flat
" is coming to understand itself"

Michael Davidson:

> Michael Palmer, BLAKE'S NEWTON, with illustrations by Bobbie Creeley, The Black Sparrow Press, Los Angeles, 1972. Paper, $3.00, Signed cloth edition, $15.00.

Michael Palmer's BLAKE'S NEWTON involves an infinite regression of the artist into his work. We receive planes or fragments of a larger edifice. At times, a 'place' is dimly perceived: "a view of Miaplacidus / at a third remove." But it is a place in the rhetorical sense that is the focus, the "third remove." The opening poem of the book outlines "Its Form":

> But to begin a procession
> or a succession of lines
> replacing the elms whose warps
> and curves are called contradictions. (p.9)

Sudden shifts of perspective, broken imagistic patterns, disontinuities from line to line are not surrealist or concretist experiments but instances of a consciousness moving through a "given" language, taking what is at hand. "Among Various," for example, draws the poem and sleep into the same advice: "In general/ more sleep. Think of it/ as a science." And the title suggests a selection, a discrimination among possible "things to be signed" or signs, a kind of poetic 'bricolage' by which the author reconstructs the poem before him.

This discrimination involves an attention to rhythmic pacing, vowel music and alliteration which unifies the seeminly disparate "places." "A reasonable ear," attributed to L(ouis) Z(ukofsky) is equally Palmer's own. The changed

name of the book' s title is recognized in this accuracy of ear:

> I changed my
> name not to be recognized. I changed
> it to John, or Wanda. A wand chair is
> wicker. A wandering dune has moved.
> It passes the fixed stars in an ancient
> catalogue. It' s gone too soon. Too
> little to choose. To you it all seems
> silly. But there once was a fiddler
> called Wandering Willie.
>
> (p. 48)

A lyric mode carries over from the poems into a series which proposes for itself an invention of prose. "Wandering Willie" embodies the kind of tonal weaving which carries a name (John-Wanda-wand-wicker) and allows the prose a free-play within names ("fixed stars").

The measure in both proses and poems is based on a kind of gravity:

> After waking he
> waited.
>
> In his mind were
> three women.
>
> (p. 29)

We feel "weight" in the line breaks, and we obtain a glimpse of the metaphysical "gravity" of the situation. For these poems, a "measure" is literally the weighing of the word in terms of its musical potential.

The function of displaced names is often to reveal them. To draw away the chair is to, in some sense, recognize that the chair is there: "You go to sit down/ and hope for a chair." In "A Reasoned Reply to Gilbert Ryle," the notion of contextual usage circumscribed by Ryle, Searle, Austin and others

of the Cambridge group is debunked, and what remains are often the contexts in which a given phrase might have existed if the (verbal) chair hadn't been pulled away. Phrases, lacking logical connectives, develope their own:

> Or else the problem
> of light and air.
>
> Upstairs a small leak.
> Trouble through the other
>
> eye
> which stays open
>
> unless the window itself
> is broken.
>
> (p. 16)

This overlapping pattern ("Trouble" in each "eye"/I) allows a variety of things to happen at once, and it is here that the heroic proportions of Blake's Newton emerge: in the eye WITH which a world is intellectually described and THROUGH which its unlimited potential is suggested, an opposition figured in Blake's painting of Newton's strong naked body as he "divides the abyss." Palmer, like Blake, maintains the essential binary nature of language as function and as spontaneous act, and earlier in "A Reasoned Reply" the paradox of utility reaches an existential limit:

> The car always starts
>
> in the morning
> and it takes me
>
> where someone else
> is supposed to be
>
> going

twice each week.

Much of the book is devoted to projecting the contours of a structure: a rhetoric, a taxonomy, a guidebook, a grammar, a poetics, thereby leaving the deeper content at some remove. "Prose 13," for example, describes an "accident that was supposed to have happened," "A Ring" extends the possibilities of broken mirror fragments into a book already charged with psychic doublings. "Holy Tuesday" provides the outlines of a diary (drawn from Jacopo da Pontormo initially), "Speech (Across Time)" graphs verbal patterns, "Here" 1, 2, and 3 are variation on not saying "here," and "Har' ri. er" is a description of a kind of grey hawk. Each creates a rhetoric that holds a body of discontinuous messages; each is curious to discover its own limits; each phrase initiates conjecture about itself.

The problematics of representation are not confined to linguistic utterance. The poet' s concern with painting, architecture, music, natural history and sculpture provides a variety of speculations about the origins of form. "A Vitruvian Figure by Juan Gris" describes the artist' s work as, "building up forms from/ the separate parts." And the poem' s first lines, once again, double the authorial frame:

A VITRUVIAN FIGURE BY JUAN GRIS

begins with a line from Donne
or anyone, that drawes Natures workes
from Natures law
moving from the eyes and spare
features...

(p. 28)

The play on "spare" describes a thin line separating "extra" or superfluous fragments and the 'few' actual lines which the artist has to work with if he is precise. Which Michael Palmer is. "Excess of eye or exercise" keeps things in shape for sure.

Will Staple: (5 poems

DEAD CAT HEAD

to steve

in the ambiguity of the moment
caught for a spell between two paths,
how can it be considered kindness to have one's
tongue cut out?
to be alone and looking
not working, pursuing pleasure, traveling to return
to a waterless shack not on a road to anywhere.

not to trap myself i renounce all i am or have been
all i seem to do and say again and again,

i renounce "i renounce"

count in my shy favor; i can hold my tongue.

(2)

it not only that i choose this life, i was left with it.
this place, the friends i can walk to are home
at the end of a ceaseless wandering. there is not another
place or pace but there will be shortly.

no one to turn to to have one's ego manipulated, one is allowed
the extremes of insecurity, lacking such fundamental reassur-
ance
in the recognition of the ungraspable.

(3)

to be trapped, caught, tamed and taught to fear

beyond the safety of a cage.

to be set free.

TO TOUCH

to touch the taunt pregnant belly

of his child who is with she

who was with me, i wondered if

the excitement that ended my nervousness

was for you, the child

of the whole passionate drama.

you who are known for strong sharp
angles can be seen into for your
soft warmth and helplessness
no matter how independent you must now be.

from all of it must yield

not for some mystical idea
or projected interrelationship

but by necessity
as a hungry mouth in a cold world cries

the giving up of selfishness

the absolute care for another' s life.

A BRUISED PEACH

i thru away a bruised peach
in reaction to a disordered camp.
now i regret, in my solitary waterless shack,
dusty and fly infested, having done so.
when asked what i was going to do with my lover
who had left me for one who likewise left her
i should have confessed that i had eaten bruised peaches,
and, as i came out of the desert without food
if i found a dried date that other men had handled,
cast off and let fall to the ground
that i would not hesitate in the least
to brush it off and stick it in my mouth --
for my faith assures me it will be just as sweet.

NONE OF MY CONSIDERATION

" none of my consideration"
what she' s doing far away
with someone else.
when ever you go you leave behind
can' t expect it be as you left.
to be detached to have a key
that locks the hurt is not to feel
all there is to feel.
but to dwell there is an indulgence
a cliff climber can not afford.
water, water over the dam
won' t run the wheel.

DRIED BIRD CLAW

dried bird claw
found within a dead snake' s desert dried skin
in a chimney between two cliffs in a sheer
tower' s side; only way up.. dried bird claw
found on finding the way
down, after peering
over edges from slanting out downward ledges,
claw which relieved my fear of dying
stranded and waterless, the spirits waiting
until full power of night to attack, swarming
the thirsty mind with fear..
dried bird claw the way back
to feel of fearing to fall, where you live
by care aware that life
can suddenly end
dizzy of height and balancing in the wind
trusting rock and body to hold
another instant.

[spring]

Robert Glück: (from SPACE POEM

2-2-47

Ed, we're bound to each other by nerve-like cables
but the visitor from space
in a cave by the sea,
the attentive werewolf,
finds in the waves
the music of the world from which he comes.
His personality celebrates
its silver anniversary
with a poem, the excess of masturbation
and dream violence.
He whistles the bullets back and says
A lot of masturbation went into writing this poem,
I call it Whistling While You Work.

He says:
I used to be a little kid
but now I have a man's hand.
I never thought I'd grow up to be a pervert
(me neither says X)
The surprise of my life,
of my body, much much to my surprise
I'm typecast Active Flesh,
my cock changes positions 90 times a minute
and stars in your favorite porno flick
about two people fucking
or about Charity who cuts a worm in two
while Pornography's fist knives people in a palm tree's shade,
and Love who puts it back together

while the fist gets mad at not being understood.
Then Pornography,
drained of life giving blood
and filled with electricity,
knocks on the door of a leaf:

He says: The sun is Energy,
the moon is the Mysterious Lord Byron.
She says: your hair looks like escaping bugs.
The heat and light flow in, not away.
He says: An unbalanced tongue acts on the rotating body.
She says: my body stretches to infinity
and she bends that way,
the face of childhood.
She bends toward youth, Maroon,
the face of Love,
and she bends this way,
a face of Brown and Blue

*

Rae Armantrout:

THE AIR

hackneyed scenes
you take from television
and pass off as your youth

Father
with real pangs of nostalgia!

drawing from 'your boyhood'
a cowboy wiseman

"NEVER TRUST A WOMAN" he insists

each act
re-run

1000

after-images
contextless, insistent

to the familiar postures
vague sentiment attaches

on the air Tom Jones sings
"I' M THE ONE WHO LOVES YOU"
while my grandmother listens

when just non-sense comes
she takes him in

*

Tenney Nathanson:

The Book of Death
The Fifth Poem

dream of the night before
hack-up murders on a t. v. screen, turn it off.

we were sleeping together in paris
fifty cents a night, a double bed.
i would groan in my sleep in the night, like my father
he would kick me awake
saying breathe.

there were two canadian women we were in their car.
we can't take you to paris but we have a friend
and you can go there, even
late at night.
so we groped through the courtyard, we went up
the door opened, she was standing
in a nightgown, then
a man was wearing underpants, o.k.,
i can let you have a bed
come in here
and then they went, and closed another door.
(and dreaming: we were out
behind a building, in a courtyard
there were bedsheets hanging on the lines.
he lifted up a flat stone, then he said
the knife
you better put it back now.

she was walking in Nice, she was moving
back and forth outside a building.

i was coming into rome
with men
it was under a bridge at night, they stopped the car, they yelled
ficci-ficci! she came over
and the driver said, how much, she said some lira
and the driver said
for everyone? she laughed and said, for one, the driver
laughed
he said another thing, she laughed
and then we went away.

and he was saying, well, you better breathe right, lying
next to him in bed.
i was reading compulsion:
two girls out by the lake, they had them down
on either side of the car, in mist.
they were killing
the little boy out by the lake, he was down
inside a concrete tube
big enough to walk in standing
by the lake's edge.
would be three or four inches full of water
would be grown with grass.
where we caught snakes who bred there in the grass
was like that.
then they covered him with acid.

open the door til it bumps the green chest.

it was fast, i couldn't sleep, let's
pretend about the horses, no.
you better stop it now
you better go to sleep and cut it out.
and julie said, well, we can play that.
we were lying down.

i was lying on the bed, the strings
would tangle, i would move them,

the blue marionette wouldn' t stand.
i would think
the moving legs, the arms
the strings would turn.

the light
would fall in lines across the floor
the door
would touch the chest
my breath
would never touch the edges of my throat.
i blinked.
i almost poked my eye out, mother
then i went like this.

there were two kinds of creatures in my dream:
needle men running over flat land
balloon men running, the needle men were after them
to touch: hot needles
in balloon of flesh

my story says:

Mr. Electrical walked out for a walk in the woods. Meanwhile, Mrs. Electrical was cooking electric shock soup. When Mr. Electrical came home, they had a good meal that took around an hour to eat. They went to bed. They got up the next morning and went for a walk in the woods. Mr. Electrical climbed a tree and when he got down he complained that his pants were all dirty. Then they went home and had electric shock eggs, went to bed and got up.

*

Bruce McClelland:

THE CELEBRANTS

They celebrate
today, & its
warmth.

out there
they are smiling
"because they never smile
anytime
else"
(because
they have to.
& we walk in winter.)

I say it is the sun,
the weather
is only its messenger
& we have
our obligations.

Which is
to listen
& they are
today. & tonight,
know it or not,
the earth's turn,
what says,
goes,
the rocks beneath my home
will show us
their memory

or ours,
the same,
the semiotic
place we have chosen
to find ourselves
in.
Which is: 'be located,'
the best we can do
is move
or not,
there is an aspect
to our motions, perfect

what can be
perfected
as if it
mattered.
Celebrate
the sun's closeness
to perfection;
Celebrate the
warmth
by remembering cold.
We go thru this
as if

something new.

22: 29
8. iii. 73
Ithaca

Bill Mayer: (4 poems

THE FURNISHING

He has brought everything he owns
into the room and still
it is a bare room.

The girl sits in the one chair
waiting for him to finish. One leg
bobs up and down as she smokes.

He moves again. He can't understand it.
He didn't mean for it to be this way.
The glass looking out. Fat, shiny leaves.

The girl goes and takes the warmth with her.
His arms. The loose, moist hands.
The room smells of old, cooked, broccoli.

THE VISITORS

The man' s arm rests on my shoulder,
heavy on me as we walk.
I am getting advice. Always, on these walks
I go with a teacher.

Am I attractive? Will I be loved?
The man is confident, but not,
I sense, for me. His confidence
is his own affair.

The clouds are stuffing the sky.
Will he try to seduce me
I wonder, vaguely, looking up.

We walk
as tho we were waiting.
The shops pass us by
with the doors swinging.
A waiter would like us to try
his soup. On the lake
I count six different shades
of blue. What about the sky?
Or the mountains around the lake?
It is too bewildering. All this

is so unreasonable. Like holding back
an erection modeling
for a woman I
cannot have.

Magic at an unimaginable cost.
A disordered life with condiments.

1-9/72

LULLABY

I open myself clearly
and cry out, crying
how the starlight passes
thru rippled glass
from her bed. And the mountains,
coming to this room, mice
under wind, scratching. The moon
rises only for me, as she sleeps.
Tho not at peace in peace
now actively I sing, singing this night
to this stranger.

A Fight in the Tetons

Then
we lay quietly, near each other, the full moon
rising,
the pale white rock, the white, flickering light
on black water.

Mountains, mountains -- I went out, up a rock
to see, soothe myself,
but so far away,
too much between me
and it.

10/72, 2/73

Lauren Shakely: (2 poems

OTHER LIVES

1.
Spring coming up:
all my memories want to pay me back now
for their having to come so far with me;
years ago
a young photographer decided
to take my picture
under the tree
in a green hat --
I gave the prints away as presents;
when he went to war
I owed him $2.50 I couldn't pay
for fear of correspondence
Once, I met some of his friends on the street Understand:
at the time I spoke to them I believed
that only the cruelest jokes
could drive away evil
I won't tell you what I said
two months later
a truck
rolled over him --
it is strange
when someone you knew
but neither liked nor disliked
is gone

2.
my sister was in town last week

but she rescued herself
she receded into the Midwest
on an airplane she was afraid of,
sinking back easily
as a stone into water
to Spring in the suburbs -- streets
full of cut grass
and oil dripping from parked cars
for a moment I believed I' d caught her

the right side of her face
flickered, a bright streak of mineral
flashed in the stone
but it was nothing
she hasn' t forgotten
bloody noses
and other horrors of our childhood
games with the hands:
scissors cut paper covers stone crushes scissors

the vision this morning that woke me:
a pair
of open scissors shing on a rock
a stone poised above them --
can' t any of us be forgiven
for the choices we' ve made?

GUILT AND ATONEMENT UNDERGROUND

Years ago I swore
I would never give a beggar a penny
unless I could pay all beggars.
Since then, I' ve learned to ignore them,
even the blind ones who come tap-tapping
down the subway aisle.

I tell myself either
"this one's a phony,"
or, "he can beat my ankles blue with that white cane,
I'm sure he must have put out his own eyes
with his own hands."

But I confess I'm a sucker for the half-a-man on wheels.
When he rolls down the aisle
glued to his little platform below the belly button,
his head at knee-level,
and using his knuckles like a gorilla to propel himself,
I nearly lean over and whisper,
"Half-a-man, where's the other half of you?"
Shot off in battle?
gangrene?
crunched off in some machine
making shirts for us?
or was the half you're missing
burned off by drugs before you were born?

I can imagine how in hospitals
they send off amputated limbs with the garbage,
but a whole half-a-man --
is it buried in a half-coffin on Long Island
under the inscription, "Here lies half-a-man
waiting for his other half'?
Half-a-man, how do you live,
how do you excrete,
how do you climb stairs,
what are the secrets of your life?
I want to feed you,
sleep with you,
give you a college education --
it is my hand reaching over
plinking the quarter in your cup.
Long ago I gave up giving to beggars,
but I suppose that some of the coins
I drop on the subway must fall

into the wrong hands.

*

[Brief notes: This is the final issue of Caterpillar.

From now on, all back issue orders should to go Serendipity Bookstore, 1790 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley Ca. 94709.

Readers who are interested in Robert Bertholf's Letter in this issue may also be interested in David Antin's essay on modernism in a recent issue of Boundary II, published at State University of New York at Binghamton.

The photographs by Spencer are images from a Paul Mathison film-in-progress Archangelic Toy. About the scenes depicted on the front and back cover: "When a young man the artist was initiated into a magical society. His master told him, 'We do not live in the Garden of Eden' -- yet the ceremonies were performed in a garden like THE Garden, not only before the Fall of Adam, but before the Fall of Luther."

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